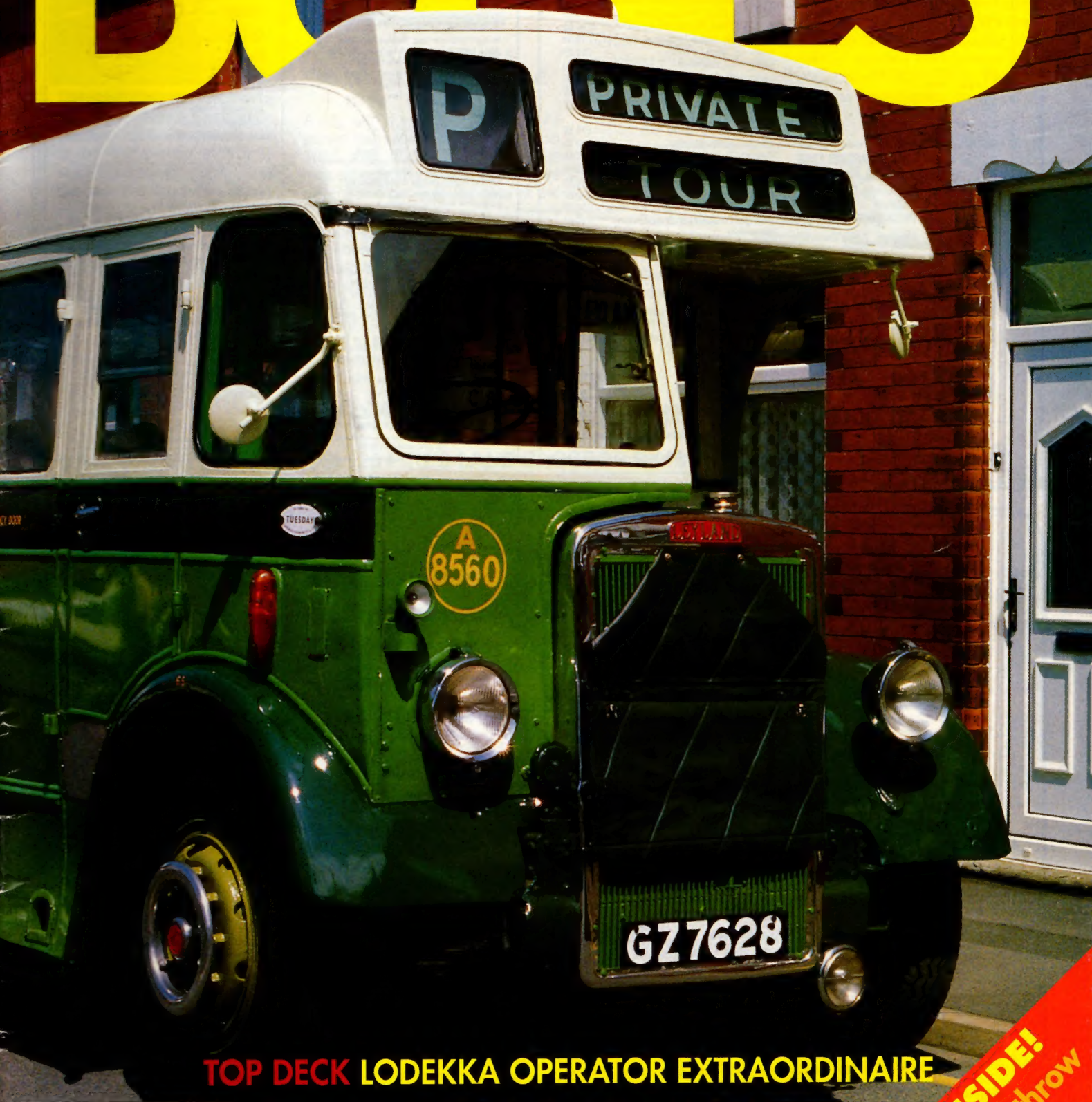


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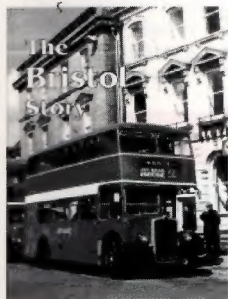
- 411.-Lancashire - February 1996. Visiting bus operators in Burnley, Accrington, Rawtenstall plus Blackburn.
- 415.-Southern England - Cine film, 1970s-80s, Hampshire, some Sussex, NBC era, plus rallies at Southsea, Weymouth.
- 416.-Yorkshire - York in November 1995 then Barnsley and Doncaster in February 1996.
- 417.-Southwest - Digital master shot 2nd March 1996 and visiting Cheltenham, Gloucester and Bristol.
- 419.-Manchester - Wigan and Manchester winter 95 then on digital master Manchester snow scenes plus Bolton and Wigan March 96.
- 420.-East of England - Filmed March 1996 visiting Huntingdon, Cambridge, St Ives, Kettering and Northampton.
- 427.-Trunk Road to Wales - British commercials in action following A449/A50 from South Wales through Monmouth.
- 430.-South Wales - 30th March 1996 with visits to Newport and Cardiff.
- 432.-Trans Andes Adventure - April 1996. Long distance buses in Santiago cross Andes Bus ride and Mendoza.
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BUSES

Volume 48 No 496

July 1996

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A special eight-page supplement examining how BAA Heathrow is getting its passengers and staff back on buses



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Cover:

Leyland portrait. Appearing at the Leyland 100 event on 2 June was Bill Montgomery's ex-Northern Ireland Road Transport Board Leyland Tiger P51 one of a number of Leyland buses from Northern Ireland at the event.
ANDY IZATT

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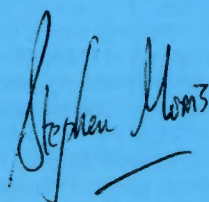
The consolidation of the bus industry still ploughs on; as reported this month Go Ahead has expanded its portfolio in London with London General — the first of the four London management buyouts to succumb to the lucrative offers from the big boys and no doubt not the last.

But the big one this time is that FirstBus has bought SB Holdings, better known as Strathclyde Buses and its adjunct, Kelvin Central. Now out of all the former PTE companies, all of which were sold to management and/or employee buyouts, only Merseybus and Mainline remain in the hands of those teams, and of those the holding company formed to take over Merseybus from the PTA, MTL, is something of a group in itself and FirstBus owns 20% of Mainline. Of those former PTE operators FirstBus now also owns outright Yorkshire Rider and half of what was GM Buses, while Stagecoach owns the other half of GMB and all of Busways and National Express owns West Midlands Travel. Between them these represent the most significant sector of deregulated urban bus operations, and this may explain why FirstBus has paid such a huge price for Strathclyde. Overall the deal is worth £110 million, by far the highest price yet paid for any bus company in Britain.

It has created a highly desirable windfall for Strathclyde's workers — reports suggest that some drivers have come away with £30,000, though as one pointed out recently, they, along with drivers all over the country, have already paid dearly in terms of reductions in wages and worsening of job security and conditions, so good luck to them! The only sadness is that the winners and losers in financial terms are determined solely by being in the right place at the right time. For every Strathclyde driver coming away with £30,000, there are others throughout the country either working for a pittance for whoever will employ them, or not working at all, and the same can be said of those bus managers who are now millionaires and those who are struggling to make ends meet as one of the growing army of 'consultants', having been ousted from the right place at the wrong time.

But is Strathclyde actually worth £110 million? No disrespect intended to the operator, but even given the strength of SBL in Glasgow and environs, which is one of the most lucrative bus territories around, it is still a lot to pay for a combined fleet somewhere in the region of 1,300 buses, not all of them in the first flush, or even last flowerings, of youth. Such a price really only reflects the fact that there are precious few worthwhile bus operators left for the big groups to buy; it seems more to be a question of supply and demand rather than a reflection of the true, intrinsic worth of the business.

Having said there are precious few operators left to buy, there are still a few relative plums for the big groups to pursue, if their owners can be coerced into selling — and how many will be able to resist offers like that? It seems by paying such a huge price for SBL FirstBus has stepped up the potential value of any remaining operator. Will the continued struggle for supremacy between the 'big two' at least (for British Bus seems to have dropped out of the fray and let the other two get on with it, for now at least) lead to more and more resources being pumped into keeping at the top of the market to impress city investors rather than into nice new buses to impress the passengers? The clash of the Titans could be an expensive one, involving the expenditure of more money than sense.



EDITOR

Editorial Contributions

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this month's news stories

FirstBus bids for first place

Special report by SANDY MacDONALD

Several weeks of speculation about future developments with SB Holdings, the major operator in what was until recently the Strathclyde Region of Scotland, ended in May with the announcement that an offer had been made by FirstBus to acquire the group for an agreed £96million cash bid plus a £14million dividend payment. At an emergency general meeting on 4 June the SB Holdings workforce voted overwhelmingly in favour of acceptance, and the offer was declared unconditional at a FirstBus emergency general meeting the following day. When this acquisition is concluded in July it will make FirstBus the largest bus company in Britain with a 20% market share, some 2% higher than that of arch-rival Stagecoach.

SB Holdings was formed through an employee buyout some three years ago and operates about 1,300 buses under the Strathclyde Buses, Kelvin Central and GCT logos. It has a 66% share of the market in the Greater Glasgow conurbation. At the end of 1994 Stagecoach bought a 21.7% stake in the group but was subsequently ordered by the Department of Trade & Industry to sell this. This ruling was to have been the subject of a judicial review in the High Court at the end of June, but Stagecoach has now agreed to sell its shares to

FirstBus, bringing in a £15 million profit on that investment by Stagecoach.

FirstBus considers the Glasgow area to be a particularly good one for bus operators. Car ownership is just 51% compared to the 66.6% national average, and 19.2% of journeys to work are on a bus compared to the general figure of 9.9%. Revenue per mile is also high at £1.72 compared with a figure of £1.30 for the Central Belt of Scotland as a whole. If the deal goes ahead fares are likely to rise soon afterwards, but in return FirstBus claims that customers would benefit in time from an improved fleet with new buses brought in to reduce the average of the fleet from 11 years to about nine years. There would also be improvements in service frequency through replacing double-deck with single-deck buses, probably of the low-floor type. FirstBus has committed £21 million to fleet replacement.

One snag in all this is that, while the deal is not conditional on there being no reference to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission, it is likely to attract the attention of that body as it would leave FirstBus with contiguous services from Helensburgh to Berwick upon Tweed, and from Paisley to Stirling and beyond, as a result of owning Lowland and Midland Bluebird in the east of Scotland.

EYMS expands in coaches

EYMS Group has expanded its coaching operations in the Manchester area by the acquisition of Charterplan. Charterplan, based in Stockport, runs 27 coaches and began life as the coaching division of Greater Manchester Transport in 1976, replacing the SELNEC Travel name. On the division of GM Buses into two parts prior to privatisation Charterplan was intended to be a separate company but in practice became part of the South company which was sold to Stagecoach earlier this year. EYMS had bought Stagecoach's earlier Stagecoach Manchester unit prior to the larger group's acquisition of GMB South, combining it with its Finglands subsidiary. Charterplan's main business is holiday tours and private hire, something which Stagecoach does not regard as part of its core business.

Charterplan is now named Charterplan Manchester and is part of the East Yorkshire Travel coach business, which also acquired the long-established four-coach business of Hollings Coaches of North Shields recently. It expands the EYT business to more than 60 coaches. Charterplan Manchester is seeking new premises in the Manchester area but is to remain in Stockport for the time being. The Hollings business now trades as Tyneside Coach Travel. The EYMS Group as a whole now runs some 470 vehicles.

London General meets Northern General

The Go-Ahead Group acquired London General, the largest of the former London Buses subsidiaries, on 24 May reportedly for £46.1 million and so increased its market share in the capital to 18%.

London General had been one of four subsidiaries to be sold in a management and employee buyout in 1994. At the time £28.5 million was paid for the company which then operated 639 buses.

Martin Ballinger, chief executive of Go-Ahead is reported in the *Financial Times* as saying that annual savings of £850,000 are hoped for by combining garages, engineering and financial services with the Group's other London business, London Central. Mr Ballinger said that the aim was to have 20% of the London market and predicted that margins would rise in the long-term after consolidation had reduced the number of operators in the city.

Go-Ahead as part of the Docklands Area Rapid Transit and Stagecoach Holdings are amongst four consortia short-listed for a seven-year franchise to operate and maintain the Docklands Light Railway as a first step to full privatisation and will include the Lewisham extension once it is completed.



Plaxtons for WA

Wallace Arnold has taken 51 new Volvo B10Ms with Plaxton Première bodywork for the 1996 season. However the Leeds coach operator, which already owns two Southdown 'Queen Mary' Leyland PD3s, has returned a Plaxton Consort-bodied AEC Reliance, 8332 U to service. The 1958 centre-entrance coach has been undergoing restoration since its repurchase seven years ago and the body frame was rebuilt by Plaxton while new seats were made with moquette to the original pattern.

Striped Swedes?

Stagecoach has registered an interest in purchasing Swedbus, one of the largest operators in Scandinavia. Currently part of Swedish Railways (SJ), Swedbus has 30% of the Swedish market as well as operations in Denmark, Norway and Finland.

Stagecoach acquired the remaining 10% management interest in its New Zealand operation in February.

Final departure for Hants & Sussex

After hanging on by a thread for a number of years Basil Williams' Hants & Sussex business finally succumbed to the inevitable on 1 June.

His original business was formed in 1937, and grew to some strength before hitting hard times in the mid-1950s. Since then Basil Williams managed to reincarnate the business on more than one occasion and has latterly been running services in South Hampshire using a motley collection of ex-London AEC Swifts and other geriatric vehicles, supplemented from last summer by three DAFs leased from Hughes-DAF to cover for vehicles put off the road by vehicle examiners.

However the company's debts have continued to mount.

The company was placed in the hands of

administrative receivers on 17 May, enabling the business to continue to trade while in receivership, and the three DAFs were returned to the dealer.

However in something of a surprise move the business was sold to Southampton CityBus on 29 May, and the 451/452 service between Hambledon and Portsmouth was dropped a couple of days later. However the rest of the operation continues, with Southampton's five Leyland Atlantean/East Lancs single-deck rebuilds taking over from 3 June, carrying the Hants & Sussex fleetname. Five Leyland Leopards coaches have gone to Southampton for assessment as to their suitability for further service and the superannuated Swifts have finally been sold.

Dart SLF appears

Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs are starting to enter service with several fleets.

London & Country has placed some in service on LT route 105 Heathrow-Greenford while North Devon has taken two for the 308 Barnstaple-Georham route. As mentioned on p9, Brighton Blue Buses has placed 15 into service. MTL subsidiary Lancashire Travel has received two for services between Parr, Earlstown and Leigh.

Meanwhile Wright's Crusader body, so far fitted only on the Volvo B6LE, was also due to make its debut on the Dart SLF in mid-June.

REGISTRATION NOTES

Reports please to **D. J. Stanier, 4 Arden Close, Derby DE23 6LG**

Some final comments for registration year M are to hand, in that **Birmingham** appeared to start M-TDA, and **Bournemouth** M-MRU just prior to August. Picking up on the final examples in the list of omissions, **Truro** did not use any GL marks in year L, and allocated M21-34 AGL (except 22/30/3) last year. A few N-HGL have appeared in the present year. This VRO handles **Isles of Scilly** allocations as well, and Mr D. Hadlow kindly tells me that L117-21 SCY, M132-5 SCY were issued, with N142 SCY following.

Leeds apparently jumped from N-EWR to N-FYG, then backtracked to N-FNW, FWR-YG, having used some G-multiples first. To date N-EWT, EWW-YG and N-FUA-UM are still outstanding. **Shrewsbury** jumped from N-TUX to N-UUU (missing UAW/UNT), **Selkirk** moved from N-TKS to N-UKS, missing out N-TSH while for **Coventry** N-AAC has been observed on Peugeot cars followed by N-WWK, N-YWK! Other VROs reverting to A-multiples recently in more orthodox fashions are **Birmingham, Cambridge, Northampton, Nottingham, Reading, Stirling, Worcester, Manchester, Aberystwyth** (EJ-series) and **Middlesbrough**. In the case of **Cambridge** this was apparently only the second use of A-multiples since 1964!

In Northern Ireland, current series comprise UDZ (**Ballymena**), UJI (**Omagh**), MIL (**Enniskillen**), KAZ (**Belfast**), SIW (**Coleraine**), YIB (**Armagh**), OBZ (**Downpatrick**) and HUI (**Londonderry**). DMN-H was reached on the **Isle of Man** in early-1996.

The pre-1963 re-registration series has now advanced to SFO, and the current series for vintage vehicles is around SV 57xx.

Coventry VRO closed in March, the highest marks noted being in N-BHP, though as is often the case several series seem to be in use at once, partly because of the large allocations to Rover and Peugeot. **Northampton** and **Birmingham** have apparently taken responsibility for the area. BSM cars have been noted with N-ANH marks from Northampton, whereas Coventry was generally used in the past. Further closures this year will include **Haverfordwest, Leicester** (dealers in Burton-on-Trent at least to be supplied by **Nottingham**) and **Liverpool**. By March 1997 we will lose **Gloucester, Guildford, London North-East, Stoke, Swindon** and **Taunton**, while **London Central** and **London South-west** are to merge. Some 39 VROs will remain operative after these changes.

We will soon be seeing first signs of P-prefix registrations in dealers' showrooms and as usual we should welcome high N/low P observations. If press speculation is correct quarterly prefix letter changes may follow to clear the present system in 1998 — more news when known.

A quarterly *Registration Newsletter* is available on subscription for more serious followers of the world of vehicle registration marks and anyone interested in this should contact Mr G. Cox, 93 Benwell Road, London N7 7BW. It is intended in future in *Buses* to cover only the main events in the registration world, so readers wishing for more information may find this useful to them.

The Government giveth and the Government taketh away

The acquisition by the Cowie Group of County Bus from National Express has been cleared by the Department of Trade & Industry as has the purchase by Stagecoach of a 50% interest in Burnley & Pendle Transport.

However John Taylor, Minister for Competition & Consumer Affairs, stated that he intended to refer Stagecoach's purchase of Cambus to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission unless suitable undertakings were given by the company which include the

divestment of MK Metro, Milton Keynes Citybus and the United Counties depot in Huntingdon. Those undertakings have now been given and will involve the sale of these businesses within the next six months.

Mr Taylor commented that 'as a result of the merger, Stagecoach would have a dominant position in the provision of bus services within the area. The merger may therefore be expected to lead to higher fares and reduced quality and frequency of services over a larger part of the area.'

Going for a ride on Merseyside

Sightseers, MTL's coaching unit has launched the Liverpool Heritage Tour which will run daily until further notice except on Christmas and Boxing days. The route connects both the Anglican and Metropolitan Cathedrals, Albert Dock and the Town Hall with Lime Street station and Paradise Street bus station. Ex-Southport Weymann-bodied Leyland PD2/40 open-topper 0654 (CWM 154C) is expected to work on the service.

The Merseyside Bus Club is celebrating its 20th anniversary and will be recreating its first tour of 20 years ago on 7 December 1996 by using the same bus, Liverpool Corporation Leyland PD2/20 L227 (SKB 224). The club invites anyone who was on the first tour to come along and we are assured that, although the bus is still unheated, the tour will be shorter this time and that proceedings will conclude with refreshments! Details from Bill Barlow, 5 Surrey Drive, West Kirby, Wirral L48 2HP.

Bus people

Ian Manning has been appointed Managing Director of Stagecoach Portugal. He is currently Deputy County Passenger Transport Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council but brings a unique knowledge of the Portuguese industry to his new job and draws on experience gained while working for Lothian Region Transport, the Scottish Bus Group and Southdown.

We regret to report the death of **Alec Head**, proprietor of Reliance Coaches of Luton, near Peterborough. He was 63 and died on 23 May following a heart attack. His business started in 1954.

Centro has appointed a new Finance Director, **Phil Severs**, who is expected to take up his new post in August. He has worked for British Rail, the National Bus Company and was instrumental in setting up Ipswich Bus in the mid 1980s.

Ian Kerr is the new materials director at Robert Wright & Sons of Ballymena while **George Richards** has been appointed to the new post of commercial aftersales manager.

Excels into service

Blackpool Transport formally launched the first four of its eight Optare Excels (201-4: N201-4 LCK) on 30 May, as planned, and placed them into service on routes 44A/B (Marton and Mereside to Cleveleys via central Blackpool) on 3 June. They are operated by Blackpool's Blue Buses subsidiary, formerly Fylde Borough Transport, which still functions as a largely separate entity from its Squires Gate premises near Blackpool Airport.

Blue Buses would however seem something of a misnomer in this instances, as the buses are predominantly bright yellow, a new variation on Blackpool's HandyBus black and yellow used for mini and midibuses. At 10.7m long and a full 2.5m wide the Optares are hardly 'midibuses' either. As delivered they are 36-seaters, though Blackpool and Fylde management are a little uncertain what to do with the single seat on the nearside at the front and may remove it to increase luggage space which is currently rather restricted.

The low-floor vehicles are being promoted as Easy Access HandyBuses. They are capable of taking wheelchairs in an area with tip-up seats just aft of the front wheelarches, though Blue Buses has been unable to certify them as wheelchair accessible, due to the fact that ramps have not been specified. Prior to placing the buses into service there was consultation with Badgerline, CentreWest and Coastline over the operation of low-floor buses and the one problem common to all has been unreliability of ramp systems; these operators have also found that the ramps hardly ever need to be deployed anyway. Moreover the step design of the Excel precludes the fitting of an understep ramp, though Optare is fitting a fold-out type on vehicles for Frank Thorpe for the London Stationlink service.

One of Fylde's new Easy Access HandyBus Optare Excels on a bus stop in central Blackpool that has been improved to take advantage of the Excels' low-floor capacity.



Instead Lancashire County Council has funded bus stop improvements with raised kerbs; these are low enough for the bus platforms to sweep over them to enable the bus to pull closely on to the stop (in theory anyway — an expensive-sounding graunching noise when we tried one suggests someone's sums may have been a millimetre or two out!) but high enough to give level boarding when the kneeling suspension is used. Traffic orders, special red surfaces to the road in the area of the bus stop and stronger enforcement by traffic wardens should ensure that stops are kept clear of parked vehicles. At the launch Councillor Golden, chairman of Lancashire County Council's Highways & Transportation Department, spoke of a 'unique partnership' between the county, the borough councils involved and Blackpool Transport but expressed disappointment that more money had not been forthcoming from Central Government for such improvements. Transport minister Steven Norris along with two characters from *Coronation Street* performed the official launch of the vehicles, and Mr Norris congratulated Lancashire County Council on its initiative and suggested that such improvements need not cost a lot.

Diary dates

29-30 June:

Crosville Enthusiast Group Crosville Gathering, in conjunction with Clwyd Vintage & Veteran Society Annual Show, The Plassey, Eytton, Wrexham. Main event on the Sunday. **Please note this is a change of date from that shown in the Rally Calendar.**

30 June:

Thornycroft centenary rally. Road run from Chiswick (Fullers Brewery) to Basingstoke (Memorial Park).

7 July:

Coastline Bus Rally Adur Recreation Ground, Shoreham. Southdown Queen Mary, crewed by a team from Buses, and other bus types in service.

21 July:

Routemaster Operators & Owners Association Vintage Bus Rally, Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden, Beds. Routemaster-operated shuttle service connects with London trains at Biggleswade.



Stagecoach Ribble has taken delivery of its Berkhof-bodied Dennis Lance SLFs for services in Manchester.

JOHN ROBINSON

Liberator storms in

Wright of Ballymena is the second UK bodybuilder to introduce a body on Volvo's low-floor B10L. The first of five for FirstBus Greater Manchester was handed over to the operator's managing director Dr Alan Westwell in central Manchester on 25 June. They are for service in Wigan as part of Greater Manchester PTE's low-floor initiative.

The Liberator is the latest in Wright's current family of bodies ranging from the Crusader on Volvo B6 and now Dennis Dart to the full-size Pathfinder, Axxess-ultralow and Liberator low-floor bodies and the Endurance for chassis such as the Volvo B10B. All use Aluisse construction and there is a good deal of commonality of parts across the range; as many window bays as possible will fit any model in the range while front ends are identical, albeit that that on the Crusader is narrower than others in the range.

The Liberator is a full 12m vehicle with a seating capacity of up to 47. The B10L chassis, which has independent front suspension and an offset rear engine and final drive in order to minimise intrusion of the rear axle in the gangway area, is delivered to Wrights as a short chassis, for separating into front and rear modules, between which Wright inserts a Volvo-built centre section. A longer, shallower, radiator is fitted on the offside, enabling five seats to be fitted across the rear rather than four with the previous radiator design, and Wrights has relocated fuel tanks to reduce intrusion into the saloon and has put air tanks under the floor towards the rear. This has had the effect of requiring a 5° ramp starting 3m ahead of the rear axle, with a step up behind the rear axle to clear the engine. Internally Wright has produced a typically neat interior, though the number of seats on the low level is surprisingly few.

On a brief ride and drive around central Manchester the vehicle demonstrated superb refinement, with very low noise levels and a ride quality second to none. Surprisingly, given the level of sophistication, Wrights has been able to price the bus competitively, starting at around £105,000, though extras fitted to the Greater Manchester vehicles, such as an understep ramp and double glazing, made them rather more expensive.

Following on from the Manchester vehicles Wright is starting work on 100 for West Midlands Travel. Meanwhile we understand that Volvo intends to use the B10L's Titan-derived independent front suspension across a wider range of models, starting, as previously announced, with the low-entry version of the B10B, the first chassis of which are now being delivered.



Wright has now bodied its first Volvo B10L and handed it over to GMB North. The B10Ls carry a variation on GMN's new livery, the yellow stripe denoting a 'superbus'.

South Coast changes Provincial launched in Portsmouth

As predicted last month the new FirstBus company for Portsmouth, Gosport and Fareham, Provincial, was officially formed on 26 May to amalgamate the operations of the former Portsmouth Transit, which ran in Portsmouth as Red Admiral and Blue Admiral, and People's Provincial. The new company marks the end of the long-established tradition of Provincial buses running in green liveries; a new cream and red livery is being introduced for the combined operation, and FirstBus has allocated 20 of its new Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D minibuses there for fleet replacements.

Piers Marlow, managing director of People's Provincial, is managing director of the new company and hopes the new era will see the end of years of confusion which have beset Portsmouth since the somewhat chaotic privatisation of

Portsmouth City Transport, which led ultimately to the formation of the Transit Holdings Portsmouth Transit company. He said the formation of Provincial heralded a new era of stability, following the introduction of a rationalised network from 26 May. Services have a minimum frequency of 10min on most Portsmouth routes, and some links which were lost as operators concentrated on competing with each other on lucrative routes have been reinstated. Whereas fares were also chaotic under the old regime a new zonal fare system has been introduced. He admitted that there was some 'upheaval to achieve what we believe is the best network for Portsmouth', and expected there to be some fine tuning of the network in the coming months. 'South Hampshire needs investment and a stable network', he said.



A former People's Provincial Leyland National in the new FirstBus Provincial livery.
PHILIP LAMB

Brighton goes low-floor

Brighton Blue Buses is one of the first operators to introduce low-floor Dennis Darts. It has placed a batch of 15 Plaxton-bodied Dart SLFs on its trunk route 49, East

Moulsecomb to Portslade via Brighton town centre and Hove, which has received appropriate branding, from 24 May.



One of Brighton Blue Buses new Dennis Dart SLFs in a special livery by Ray Stenning for service 49.

New-look Brighton & Hove

As mentioned last month Brighton & Hove Bus & Coach has been introducing variations on its new standard livery for different areas of its operations. In addition to the Optare Sigmas illustrated last month in a burgundy version for route 1, Mercedes-Benz minibuses on the Busy Bee service 7 in Brighton have a dark blue-based livery and the company's 10 Scania N13/East Lancs Cityzen double-deckers have arrived in what is described as a jade green version of it,

though a local source described it as turquoise and conceded that if it was jade green, it had faded! These are in use on a rebranded service 25 between Southwick and Sussex University, for which they are branded Unibus 25.

The new Scania 78-seaters with 220bhp Scania DS11-78 engines and Voith D863 transmission. Brighton & Hove has 34 East Lancs-bodied Scania double-deckers in its 160-vehicle fleet.



Far left:
Showing the now standard red version of the Brighton & Hove livery is an ex-Bournemouth Wadham Stringer-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811.
PHILIP LAMB



Left:
One of 10 new East Lancs Cityzen-bodied Scania N113s in the 'jade green' Unibus 25 version of the new livery.
TERRY S. BLACKMAN



Far left:
Contrasting with the red-liveried vehicle is another ex-Bournemouth Wadham Stringer-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811 in the purple version for route 7.
TERRY S. BLACKMAN



Left:
A burgundy-liveried Optare Sigma of Brighton & Hove passes through Old Steine in central Brighton on route 1A to Portslade.
PHILIP WALLIS

The good news is that, this month, always the bumper month for the new season's issues, there is not a single multi-colour map for me to criticise! Furthermore, the maps are not only varied and interesting but from a variety of cartographers.

In alphabetical order, first is **Cambridgeshire** (tel: 01223 317740) which has re-issued its system map. From Pindar, it shows brown bus routes and black railways on a pale yellow background, with excellent results for clarity. Route-numbers are colour-coded for frequency (less than five days a week or five or more). The service-list on the rear repeats this and it would be better if it offered more detail. First-rate blow-ups are shown for Ely, Huntingdon, March, St Ives, St Neots and Wisbech, with, on the reverse, full city maps for Cambridge and Peterborough — the former showing well how much better this style is than that chosen by Stagecoach Cambus, reviewed last month, for the same city (and also showing how the cartographer is not to blame as both are from Pindar!)

Derbyshire does not get a mention as frequently as it ought, because one takes it for granted that every new edition of its three books comes with an updated system map. These are not glossy sheets but two-colour maps on ordinary paper, making them cheap to produce and pulling the rug from under the feet of those who try to con us into believing they would really love to do a map were it not for the cost! This latest edition is for the Peak District (tel: 01332 292200). It uses blue roads (dashed for less-than-daily) with black numbers, plus black for railways and long-distance footpaths. As usual it is far from parochial, showing as much detail as the sheet allows for adjacent authorities (especially South Yorkshire!). Of course this map supplements the excellent book, *Derbyshire* remaining one of the country's top counties for publicity.

Living in **Dorset** I am pleased to extol the virtues of my own county (and of Wilts & Dorset and Yellow Buses, later). Its series of eight area timetables has just been published for the summer and a set is available for £2 post-free (tel: 01305 224535). These contain new town plans for Blandford Forum, Bridport, Dorchester, Gillingham, Lyme Regis, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Swanage, Wareham, Weymouth and Wimborne Minster, all from Pindar. All roads are shown, bus routes being reversed out with adjacent route-numbers, and these are excellent additions to the comprehensive guides (Bournemouth and Poole are left to the operators and, in any case, will not form part of Dorset from 1997, much to my regret!)

Kent has re-issued its system map (tel: 0800 696996). From FWT this shows green routes on a white background, the shade of green indicating frequency. An inset shows ferry and rail routes to France plus, à la Derbyshire, a chunk of the French, Belgian and Dutch network as room allows! The rear has a very detailed frequency chart and this is a first-rate production (town plans are left to the various versions I have reviewed in recent months plus the 17 area books that Kent publishes).

A straight re-issue, unchanged in format

since last year, is the superb **Shropshire** system map, with many town plans, from FWT (tel: 0345 056785). This complements its eight area guides, though many of the plans are also reproduced in those.

Suffolk's system map, also from FWT, is re-issued (01473 265676) using brown and green for roads, the former for those served less than five days a week. Similarly red or black route numbers are added — a helpful touch allowing one to see easily an infrequent route running along a road with an otherwise better overall frequency. A wealth of additional tourist detail is added and the reverse has the usual 15 town plans plus a separate rail and coach map. An excellent map from a county that, unfortunately, has just suffered major public transport budget cuts.

The **West Sussex** map is again available as a single sheet from FWT (tel: 01243 777556), town plans being left to its six area books — a useful addition being a small plan showing how those books relate to the overall map. Blue roads and green railways show the system clearly, utilising red route-numbers. Tourist detail is added, as is a frequency chart on the reverse.

In Wales and Scotland local government re-organisation will take some time to settle down and hence require a slack period with few new maps produced but, thanking the editor in anticipation, may I suggest that those wanting full details of the 44 new

an excellent frequency-chart on one side, plus a large city centre blow-up with all bus stops shown, and separate Night Bus and rail system maps on the reverse.

Turning to operators, **Bournemouth Transport** (Yellow Buses) re-issued its separate FWT system map to coincide with the major changes in the town centre following the recent extension of pedestrianisation. One side shows Mon-Sat daytime services, the other evenings and Sundays plus the town centre blow-up — and a new 'consistent-24-hour' policy, carried through from its revamped timetable booklet, actually has the detail shown on the map as 'Mon-Sat 18.00-23.00'. This policy also sees lost property office, coach hire and, not least, enquiry office opening hours all shown in the format (for the last, tel: 01202 557272 — an impressive 08.00-23.30) a spokesman telling me they felt it silly that so many operators use 24-hour in their books and then emblazon their maps with something like '8am to 6pm'. Well done Yellow Buses (and, no, it's nothing to do with the fact that I live only a mile away from the Mallard Road HQ, as it only recently ceased using 12-hour clock anyway!)

Wilts & Dorset suffered from the same town centre changes and those details were shown in a plan in its new timetable, but soon after came the system map, from Pindar (tel: 01202 673555). This shows W&D's network in red and that of Damory

Coaches in green with tourist detail added and blow-ups for Salisbury city centre and the Greater Bournemouth/Poole area. The reverse is unusual in having a list of

ON THE MAP

BARRY S DOE AFIMA, MCIT

authorities and what each currently produces, should send £5 (payable to B. S. Doe) for a copy of the new edition of Doe's *Directory of Timetables* (25 Newmorton Road, Bournemouth BH9 3NU)!

In the meantime one new Welsh map was produced in advance of the changes, entitled **North East Wales** and being a system map of what was Clwyd, but is now Denbighshire & Flintshire County and Wrexham County Borough Councils (tel: 01978 363760). From FWT it utilises red roads and route-numbers but has good background relief and shows railways in black. There are blow-ups of Abergele, Chirk, Colwyn Bay, Denbigh, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Ruabon, Ruthin, Shotton and Wrexham (some of those actually being in adjacent Conwy County Council which, to complicate matters, was re-named and is shown on this map with its originally-planned title, Aberconwy & Colwyn!)

The first timetable I have seen from the reorganisation is from the **Isle of Anglesey** County Council — but then one should not be surprised at its efficiency seeing it was part of Gwynedd! A single book, it contains a high-quality colour in-house system map on the inside cover, plus black and white towns plans of Amlwch, Bangor, Beaumaris, Holyhead, Llangefni (the county town), and Menai Bridge (tel: 01248 752459).

From Scotland all that has been published at the time of writing is a new **City of Edinburgh** Council map (tel: 0131 225 3858). From FWT this is of very high quality, with fully-named roads in shades of brown according to frequency and

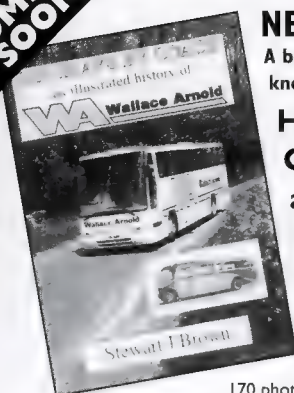
all its major towns, extolling the virtues of, and summarising the services to, each.

Next to **The Shires**, which lacks maps, but has produced a much-needed one of Aylesbury in its new Aylesbury & the Vale book (tel: 0345 788788). From FWT it is only A4 sized, but shows roads in blue if they carry more than three buses per hour, orange if less, with each named and with adjacent route-numbers using the same colour code. Roads served only by country buses are shown in pale blue and railways and canals are added. It is first-rate and more of the same would be welcome for its many other towns.

Southern National has re-issued its system sketch-map, including North Devon Red Bus and Tiverton & District routes and produced by Pindar (tel: 01823 272033). As a low-cost venture this is successful, with red numbers alongside blue routes and details of Explorer and other tickets added.

Finally, several readers wrote to me to say that when they rang **Lincolnshire Road Car** to ask for the new Newark map that I had reviewed, staff there said they knew nothing about it. The problem is that Road Car now shows only the Lincoln number for all enquiries, but then doesn't keep staff up-to-date with system-wide publicity. Odd? Yes, but you've heard nothing yet: one reader told me that his local Road Car enquiry office (Scunthorpe) is unique in Britain — its telephone number has gone ex-directory!

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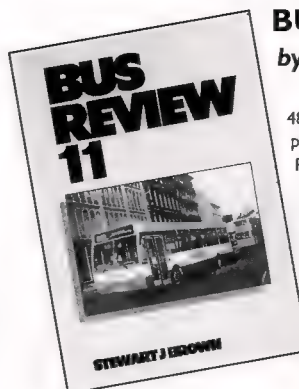
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News from the capital

JOHN ALDRIDGE

ROUTES

London Transport is progressively introducing a new computerised travel enquiry system known as ROUTES (Rail Omnibus Underground Travel Enquiry System). The new system provides LT's Telephone Enquiry Bureau staff at 55 Broadway with full on-screen visual information and has been developed and installed under the auspices of EDS, a leading information services provider.

The HP9000 system is installed at 36 operator points at the telephone enquiry bureau with 11 additional support access points,

and a further 14 access points at the 13 other travel information centres around London.

Staff are now able to provide information on the simplest, quickest or most direct combination of services between two points as well as the location of bus stops and the time taken to walk between interchange points.

Prior to the introduction of ROUTES the telephone bureau relied on over 2,000 maps, timetables, faretables and other documents when responding to over 7,000 calls a day.

CentreWest on the move

It is not only Marshall-bodied Mercedes-Benz buses that are on order for CentreWest. It is also buying seven of the new low floor version of the Dart SLF-Plaxton for a new daily express service between Uxbridge and Heathrow scheduled to start in August, though the buses may not be ready then. They will be 9.2m long. A demonstrator will be arriving first, but will be used from Westbourne Park garage on route 28 (Golders Green-Wandsworth) and 31 (Camden Town-Chelsea) and then briefly on route 222 (Uxbridge-Hounslow). The last-mentioned will be particularly interesting as it will be running alongside two-year-old heavyweight Dennis Lance SLFs with Wright low-floor bodies.

Yet another CentreWest Dennis Dart order is for 9.8m long versions (not low-floor), of which four will be for Orpington Buses, and the others back in home territory on route 331 (Uxbridge-Ruislip), a service won by London Buses from Luton & District/The Shires.

Both 331 and the Uxbridge-Heathrow express (to be numbered A10) were won by London Buses but 'for obvious reasons of schedule efficiency' will work out of parent company CentreWest's Uxbridge garage,

which in turn will have to move some of its 20 or so Metrobuses for the 207 to Acton which also has a similar number on the route. The 207 (Uxbridge-Shepherd's Bush Green) is, of course, the successor to the old London United's tram route 7, once the home of brand-new Feltham trams. With a requirement for some 40 buses in total 207 is still a busy service, and there is also the limited stop 607 at present worked by a mix of Leyland Lynx and Leyland Nationals. For that there are the already announced Olympians on order: they will have Northern Counties bodies with 70 seats, tinted glass and a public-address system. They will have a new livery, for which staff at Uxbridge are taking part in a design competition.

Talking of liveries, CentreWest says that the brown and yellow of London Buses and the blue and yellow of Beeline will both be retained. Beeline already has ten low-floor Darts on order for service in Windsor. In addition, CentreWest is to move Lynxes from Uxbridge to Beeline and Mercedes-Benz midibuses from Alperton to Greenford, where they will replace Renaults, which in turn will replace some of the old Leyland Nationals in the Beeline fleet.

MMs and MMs

Yet more variety has come to the London scene with the addition of a dozen Marshall-bodied MAN 11.220s into the fleet of MTL London for route 95 (Southall-Shepherd's Bush Green), which has been won on tender from CentreWest. Three more are to follow with another nine due later in the year for another tender win, route 79 (Edgware-Alperton), at present operated by London Buses. The later batch may have a revised front.

These buses are classified MM, which is logical enough and also capable of being remembered by your scribe. But, over at CentreWest are some Marshall-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811Ds which that company codes as MM. Three more of these are on order for further tender wins by CentreWest at Orpington. Incidentally, CentreWest has now moved into its new depot at St Mary Cray, and vacated the old Swanley garage so its Orpington Buses operation now has premises handy for most of its routes and staff.



MTL London's Marshall-bodied MAN 11.220s are now in service on route 95 (Southall-Shepherd's Bush Green). MM254 (N121 XEG) is seen in Southall. GEOFF RIXON

A day at the Zoo

Reader Ian Brown of Hemel Hempstead points out that Whipsnade Zoo — actually called Whipsnade Wild Animal Park these days — is in the Bedfordshire countryside, not Hertfordshire as I claimed.

He also points out something that I had not realised: that there is still a bus service from London, albeit infrequent. According to its timetable Green Line operates a service from London Victoria Bullied Way (the replacement for Eccleston Bridge) during school holidays only. It leaves at 08.50 and arrives at Whipsnade at 10.30, returning at 16.00 to arrive back in London at 17.40. Operation is by the Hemel

Hempstead depot of The Shires, formerly Luton & District.

It sounds to me like a cheap-to-operate fill-in turn by a vehicle on peak-hour commuter work. How many families would want to leave London as early as that? I checked back in an old (1962) Green Line timetable and found that LT's summer only 726 left Baker Street at 11.30 and arrived at 13.00 with the return leaving at 18.00. That timing ran daily July to 11 September with an extra Monday to Friday run in high summer and up to three different timings on Sundays during the same period. The Shires' operation does not run at all at weekends.



London United is taking delivery of a batch of Alexander R-type-bodied Volvo Olympians for the 131. VA1 is seen at Fulwell before entering service. Oddly, code VA is also used by London United's subsidiary Westlink for its Vectas. GEOFF RIXON

Bigger buses

Back in south-west London, London United is converting route H37 (Hounslow-Richmond) from midibus to full-sized single-deckers, with 13 refurbished Leyland Nationals. For a while the route has had a number of full-sized vehicles on it, because its high-frequency service has been attracting more and more passengers: indeed, it has been leaving people behind at times. The refurbishment of the Nationals is being carried out by London & Country at Crawley and includes interiors to DiPTAC specification.

One of London United's refurbished Leyland Nationals for the H37 Hounslow-Richmond service is LS268 (YYE268T) at Richmond bus station.

GEOFF RIXON



Docklands Transit has 18 new Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Darts for the 106 between Finsbury Park and Whitechapel of which 425 (N425 MBW) is one.



General investment

The biggest order for low-floor buses from an individual company is likely to be placed shortly by London General, which has just been re-awarded all of the Sutton area operations on a new five-year contract due to begin in the Autumn. The contract covers routes 80, 93, 151, 152, 154, 157, 163, 164, 393, 413 and S1, the last-mentioned being currently worked by LondonLinks with midibuses.

To do all this no less than 95 new buses will be bought, at a cost of some £9 million. All the routes will get new buses, in total 42 double-deckers and 53 low-floor single-deckers, and frequencies of some of the routes will be increased. The number of low-floor single-deckers is particularly impressive and all will be in service within a reasonably compact area. It will make the

On a Dennis Dart theme yet again, Docklands Transit has 18 with Plaxton Pointer bodywork for route 106 (Finsbury Park-Whitechapel), a route won from Leaside, which used Metrobuses. These Darts are 9.8m long models, with single-door, split-step entrances. Not long ago the company was named Docklands Minibus and ran only small buses, though up in Oxford sister company Thames Transit has 48 Darts.

previous pattern of conversion of one route here, and another there both in London and elsewhere seem dated.

A further aspect of this tender success and other recent LT awards is that without any formal announcement we seem to be going over entirely to new vehicles. Passengers (and operators too) will no doubt welcome it, but one can't help thinking about all those old buses that the former LT subsidiaries had to buy at quite high prices at privatisation.

No doubt there was a huge sigh of relief within London General when it won the Sutton routes again, for operation from its Sutton and Merton garages. No doubt too there will be mixed feelings within the organisation following its surprise take-over by Go-Ahead Group.

The end of two landmarks

There have been two recent closures or demolitions of note. One was the demolition of Aldenham, the famous overhaul works once immortalised by Cliff Richards — Sir Cliff these days — with his film musical 'Summer Holiday'. Best remembered for its vast interior and an overhead crane that swung double-decker bodies high above other double-decker bus bodies, Aldenham was situated out in the Hertfordshire countryside. It had been built as the carriage sheds for an extension of the Northern Line of the Underground, and was used in the war as an aircraft factory under the London Aircraft Production Scheme that was run by London Transport.

Postwar Green Belt legislation meant that the Underground extension was never finished, and it became the bus overhaul works for a fleet that was once projected to number about 10,000 buses. It remained a rather isolated place with a special fleet of buses to bring its workforce in and out each day. Some of them travelled considerable distances: for example there was a daily staff bus from Reigate, Surrey.

Aldenham was in its element overhauling RTs and Routemasters and could complete 56 buses a week, but a smaller fleet, longer intervals between overhauls, the unsuitability of rear-engined buses for its system of separating bodies and chassis and rising costs all combined to kill it all off.

Anyway, at short notice the LT Museum commendably re-enacted the opening sequence of 'Summer Holiday' on 12 April this year with two of its buses as demolition began at the works which has been derelict since 1986. The site will become a business park and is now owned by Slough Estates.

That organisation had its beginnings at the Slough Dump, the site to which many World War One military vehicles were brought back from France and Belgium for scrapping or rebuilding. Subsequently the site became the Slough Trading Estate.

Another well-known, and older, establishment to close its doors in April was London & Country's Reigate garage. There had been a base there since 1912 and subsequently the former premises of East Surrey Traction became the headquarters and main garage of London Transport's Country Area. The present building (it has yet to be demolished!) dates from the 1930s although an earlier adjacent former garage was only pulled down a few years ago. Also adjacent is a modern office block which continues as the headquarters of London & Country.

The last day of vehicles operating out of Reigate garage (a Sunday) was marked by use of a GS and later an RF on local route 435 while the prototype Routemaster coach, RMC4, did a couple of runs in the evening to Croydon on the 405. With the end of Green Line routes and a general drop in activities the vehicle allocation at Reigate had become a shadow of its former self, though some of the garage space was used for mechanical work on vehicles for conversion to Greenway specification.

Reigate's successor is a mainly open-air site at Merstham formerly used by British Telecom. Another new depot for London & Country is at Greenford for operating newly-won route 105 (Heathrow-Greenford), at present using Dennis Darts moved in from other garages pending delivery of new low-floor ones.



The LT Museum's RT4712 and RM1 in front of the famous Aldenham edifice on 12 April.
LT MUSEUM

MILLAR'S TALES

ALAN MILLAR'S monthly column of miscellaneous items.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO. . . ?

. . . European seatbelt legislation

A year ago, the European Commission seemed to be moving closer to legislating for seatbelts in all new buses and coaches sold in the 15 member states of the European Union. With that number of countries involved, it's hardly surprising that decision making is slow.

The best hope now is that the rules will apply to all new vehicles registered for the first time after 2001. That's why the UK government is bringing in its own

seatbelt laws, as a safety measure for children, ahead of the EU measures.

The latest news is that the technical adaption committee working on seatbelt legislation has agreed that lap belts and energy-absorbing seats will have to be fitted in large coaches and that three-point lap-and-diagonal belts will have to go in new minibuses. The decision is still a long way off being ratified by the transport ministers of the member states.

Why that Kingfisher got the bird . . .

A source who claims to know has shed some light on why Huddersfield's Rider Group buses now rejoice in the name of Kingfisher.

Back in March, I asked why the name was used on the town's green buses when kingfishers are bright blue and orange and, indeed, why the name at all when there wasn't so much as a feather on the new livery and no one seemed to be aware of any connection between Harold Wilson's birthplace and said river bird.

The company itself has remained silent, but well placed rumour has it that the kingfisher was a victim of the new FirstBus corporate identity which tolerates

no symbol other than the group's stylised *f*. My mole (now there's an idea for a bus company name) says that the original plan was to have a kingfisher logo as a Yorkshire counterpart of the Badgerline badger — a cuddly sort of creature to give the buses a friendly face.

But just as they took paraquat to the GRT thistle (leaving FirstBus 'it's bereft of anything — even a humble dot) and gassed the badger, the FirstBus corporate identity team gave the kingfisher logo the bird. By then, creative minds had presumably run out of energy to think up a flightless name for the Huddersfield company and the name stuck. Or so the story goes.

. . . and they're getting knotted in Shrewsbury

British Bus doesn't use its corporate logo on buses and it leaves its subsidiaries to identify themselves locally. So Midland Fox has begun rebranding its newest buses in very dark blue with a fox at the back in Badgerline's abandoned style and Midland Red North has a . . . well, what *does* it have?

A Shrewsbury reader describes the device on the latest blue Dart SLFs on park-&-ride services as a ball of string. It could even be mistaken for one of those extra terrestrial creatures that haunt science fiction movies, but MRN, helpfully, has come up

with an explanation. The apparent jumble of interwoven lines is a combination of the antlers of MRN's stag, Stevensons of Uttoxeter's rising sun and the Staffordshire knot. We'd never have guessed and, by the way, is the knot appropriate for a logo launched in the county town of Shropshire?



When taking shelter means you get wet

Notwithstanding the influx of the summer hoardes, I gather that a high proportion of Blackpool's bus and tram passengers these days are either elderly or homeless.

The Fylde coast remains a popular retirement place for northern widows who thrive on the sea air and flat roads and, apparently, it's also the most selected destination of rootless Britons after London — the next most popular centre in the land in which legend has it that jobs grow on trees and fall like leaves on to gold-paved streets.

Both groups, you might think, would appreciate a generous supply of bus shelters to protect them from the prevailing elements, especially out of season. Yet if you went there earlier this year, you would have

found dozens of shivering souls standing at unprotected stops, clapping their frozen hands together, shuffling their feet and breathing words of frustration through oral steam.

For the town's 200-odd bus shelters vanished overnight. The company which sold advertising on them lost its contract and, rather than give them or sell them to Blackpool Transport which has taken on the task, it uprooted them in an apparent fit of pique and left passengers out in the cold.

New shelters are on the way, and should have been installed by now, but if you live at another end of the country and find some obviously Blackpool graffiti at your local bus stop at least you'll understand why.

In search of a tram?

I hear that loadings on Sheffield's gleaming Supertrams are several millions short of the promised target. And here's the apparent evidence with rival bus operator Mainline's chairman and chief executive, Peter Sephton, peering into the distance through binoculars, seemingly in search of a single passenger using the multi-million pound trams. 'No, she's caught a B10M instead,'

he's telling smiling Steve Dewhurst, Volvo's bespectacled bus sales manager behind him, while Alexander's commercial director, Anthony Pursey, gives the thumbs up for another batch of PS bodies. Or is this just a contrived PR photograph in the winner's enclosure at Doncaster racecourse? We leave you to guess.



Garage gone, but Routemaster Close

And is this the latest victim of government cuts, a low tech substitute for London Transport's Countdown real time passenger information system which tells you when the next bus is coming? Do other signs pop up with 'Dart Gone' and 'Scania Distant' on them or is there a sensible explanation?

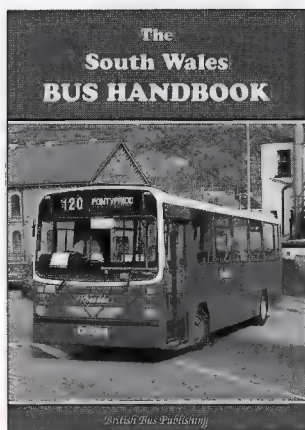
There is, for deprived of a Tramway Avenue or Railway Cuttings within its boundaries, Newham Council has commemorated London's best loved contemporary bus in a housing estate built on the site of

the old West Ham garage. Local reader Peter Beckwith, who supplied me with the picture, says the sign may also be accurate as Routemasters soldier on in the area with Stagecoach East London.



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ENQUIRE WITHIN

What is Iveco?

Multinational vehicle builders confuse many *Buses* readers who may know the histories of British manufacturers better than the backs of their hands, but don't know how to pronounce the names of the modern giants, never mind understand where they come from or who they are.

I hope to shed a little light in occasional future issues, starting with Iveco. The correct pronunciation, by the way, is either 'lh-veh-co' or 'lh-vay-co', but you'll hear plenty calling it 'Eye-vee-co' in the same way that a Swedish furniture store and a Balearic island are mispronounced within these shores.

Today, it's Fiat's truck and bus division and is firmly under Italian control, but the initial 'I' doesn't stand for Italy or Italian. Iveco is an acronym for Industrial Vehicles Corporation, an English language company formed in January 1975 with Italian, German and French factories and initially with headquarters in 'neutral' Amsterdam.

It was formed by amalgamating Fiat's Gruppo Veicoli Industriali truck and bus division (making Fiat and OM products in Italy and Unic in France) with Magirus Deutz, one of the smaller German manufacturers. Fiat had also tried to link up with Leyland in the UK and with Mack in the United States. Until 1980, Fiat owned 80% of Iveco and KHD (Magirus's parent) owned 20% and they offered a choice of Fiat water-cooled and Deutz air-cooled engines across their combined ranges.

That didn't work as well as planned and KHD sold its stake to Fiat in 1980. From 1982, Iveco replaced Fiat and Magirus as the main maker's badge, the Magirus bus plant in Mainz was closed and Iveco soon stopped selling buses in Germany. The Unic truck factory at Trappes, near Paris, was shut in 1984 and the model ranges were rationalised with Deutz engines axed. But the group expanded in 1986 when Iveco Ford was formed as a joint UK sales company owned 48% by Iveco and 48% by Ford; effectively, Iveco is in control, but Ford bears part of the risk and shares in the rewards without having to invest in its own products. Ford and Fiat have since amalgamated their farm tractor businesses and they even talked once about merging their European car operations.

In 1990, the present shape of Iveco was completed when it acquired control of Pegaso, the then state-owned Spanish bus and truck maker whose buses were mainly MAN designs and which also included Seddon Atkinson in the UK. Today, Pegaso produces the EuroRider chassis just beginning to appear with British coach operators.

Mr Angry of Romford

You're fair game for bystanders if you photograph buses in service. Kids like to get into the picture and if adults ask you what you're doing, they're either being curious or else they think something far more exciting than a double-decker is about to come along. If you're like me, you politely tell them as little as necessary. But be prepared for the reluctant walk-on extra.

I met him on a freezing January lunchtime in Romford when I had just snapped a picture I would otherwise have forgotten having taken by now, of a Capital Citybus Olympian.

As I returned my camera to its case, a silver-haired gent started asking me what I was photographing. Correction. He wasn't so much asking as accusing and, as far as he was concerned, no explanation of mine would contradict his belief that I had taken his photograph for nefarious purposes.

Who did I represent? How could he know I was telling him the truth? Had I any identification? Wasn't I breaking the law taking pictures of people without their permission? (As far as I'm aware,

you can photograph who or what you like in a public place provided you don't make a nuisance of yourself or get in their way.) Why wouldn't I accompany him to the police station to find out what they thought? Let's flag down the next passing panda car.

I was determined neither to lose my cool nor make the grand gesture of stripping out my exposed film — and I knew I daren't show him a business card with 'freelance journalist' on it. That would be like 25 red rags to as many bulls.

Suddenly, the situation cooled. Grasping for a way out, I showed him my driving licence, he seemed happy that I lived 50 miles away and he told me his name. Then it began to emerge that he had been called as a witness in a case I preferred to know nothing about and that he had thought I was a private detective. We parted civilly with a handshake.

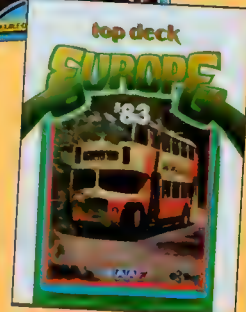
Next time, I'm tempted to arm myself with some totally make believe business cards with a distant nonexistent address and phone number. Any better ideas?

ADVENTURES WITH LODEKKAS

For more than 20 years it has been possible to see the world from the top deck of a trusty Bristol Lodekka owned by London-based Top Deck Travel. Amid rumours that 1996 might mark the end of Bristol operation. ANDY IZATT talked to Paul Ludemann, Top Deck's Operations Manager, to find out more about the company and what the future holds for the Lodekka.



The Top Deck fleet during winter storage in Surrey was always an impressive sight. This line-up was at Martlands Industrial Estate in December 1992. ANDY IZATT



of the family' and so was given a name, the choice often being a story in itself! Top Deck is about having fun. As the Europe '88 brochure said 'The idea behind

Top Deck, right from the beginning, was quite simple. We wanted to have as much fun from running the tours as our customers have going on them'. 'The deckerhome is just about the best way to tour if you're young, adventurous, on a budget and completely barmy!'

With its revolutionary drive-line and drop-centre axle, the ECW-bodied Bristol Lodekka was one of the classic designs of the postwar period with over 5,000 built between 1953 and 1969. Those canny Scots in Perth gave Lodekkas a new lease of life during the early critical growth years of Stagecoach but the operator that has shown just how durable and dependable the type can be is Top Deck Travel who at the height of Lodekka operation, in the mid-1980s, ran nearly 60 LD, FS and FLFs converted into 'deckerhomes' with on board catering and sleeping facilities on tours quite literally around the world.

The early years

The Top Deck story dates back to 1973 when two Australian vets on holiday, Graham Turner and Bill James, bought UHY 357 an ex-Bristol Omnibus Bristol KSW6G, nicknamed it *Argus*, and with 15 friends aboard, operated it on an overland tour through France, Portugal, Spain, across the Straits of Gibraltar to Morocco and into the Sahara Desert. The trip was a great success and the two vets wondered if the idea would appeal to others. They guessed rightly that it

would. Although trading as Top Deck Travel, the two vets appropriately called their new company Argas Persicus Travel, Argas Persicus being a type of cattle tick. The following year saw the arrival of the first Lodekka, LD YHT 940, called *Grunt*, and it was this type which was to become the fleet standard with the first FLF, ex-East Midland DAL 309C *Golly*, arriving in 1978. Bristol were not quite to have it all their own way though as the third bus in the fleet had been a Park Royal-bodied AEC Bridgemaster, PBO 699, which had already been converted into a caravan, but it was sold in 1976.

A double-decker with on-board accommodation gave friendly 18-35 year olds from Britain, Canada, as well as Europe the chance to travel and meet others with a similar interest. However the biggest group of travellers came from 'down under' and were young people doing the grand tour of Asia, Europe and the States. After several weeks or even months on the road the bus become 'one

Avro of Orsett in Essex supplied ex-United SHN 253F *Sixpence* photographed outside the Blue Mosque, Istanbul in June 1986 on one of its first European tours. The bus was to have a short life with Top Deck as it was damaged beyond repair when a tired lorry-driver drove into the back of it while it was parked behind another Lodekka that had broken-down on the M25 in 1988.

ANDY IZATT



Global expansion

In the early-1980s the deckerhome business was booming. Euroscan of London had been taken over in 1980 bringing further Lodekkas into the fleet and an extensive European and Asian programme was now being offered as well as UK tours. A foothold in the US market had seen six FLFs exported between 1980 and 1984, the first being 813 MHW *Errol Flynn*, but the most notable was LAH 448E *Edna*, new in 1960 but bought by Eastern Counties in 1967 after being used as a test-bed by Bristol Commercial Vehicles. The American Lodekkas were licensed locally in California by the company's Los Angeles office or in New York and were used on a range of tours from either city incorporating 30 States, Canada, Mexico or even Central America. The 'Big One' was the ultimate journey, a 12 week circular trip right across the continent and back again visiting the Grand Canyon, Nashville and Niagara Falls along the way. The *Dallas Times Herald* featured Top Deck and Curly Gladman, the Australian in charge of US operations in May 1983. Curly had left his job as an accountant to travel and met up with friends who worked for Top Deck in London. Before he knew it he was behind the wheel of a Lodekka bound for Greece on a ten-day European tour. In the event the trip took a little longer than planned. There was a girl he knew in Venice, but the boss forgave him and he was to become Top Deck's man in America.

The US buses were slightly more sophisticated than their European counterparts. Taking advantage of plug-in electricity supplies available at American camp sites each bus had a TV, microwave and toaster in addition to the usual features which included a kitchen area, oven, water tank and sound system on the lower deck with bunk-beds, convertible seating and storage up stairs. Paul Ludemann happily recalls the interest that the buses aroused amongst other camp users who on more than one occasion offered to swap their vehicles for a Top Deck Lodekka. Although the US tours were popular particularly with Australians and New Zealanders the programme was brought to an end in 1986 with most of the buses being sold locally although two, HHY 183D *Inter* and LAH 448E *Edna* made it back to the UK for further service. Insurance for righthand drive vehicles had become increasingly prohibitive and the company had come under considerable pressure to rebuild the entrances on the off-side to allow loading and unloading next to the kerb.

Top Deck already had a presence in the Australian market using at least one converted ex-Sydney half-cab double-decker believed to have been an AEC Regent III, but in 1982 ex-Brighton & Hove FLF6G KPM 84E *Moose* was duly dispatched, being promoted in the 1982-4 brochure as a fully-imported deckerhome from Britain. It was possible for Top Deck clients to fly to Perth either direct

When Top Deck bought 855 CHU *Wai Tam*, an ex-Bristol Omnibus LD, in 1980 it had already been converted into a caravan. The bus was working a European tour when it was photographed on the Island of Corfu.

R. MARTIN/M. BATEMAN COLLECTION



Semi-automatic WWC 743F *Akko* (later *Acko*), which is still in the fleet, runs through Interlaken, Switzerland on a European tour in July 1985.

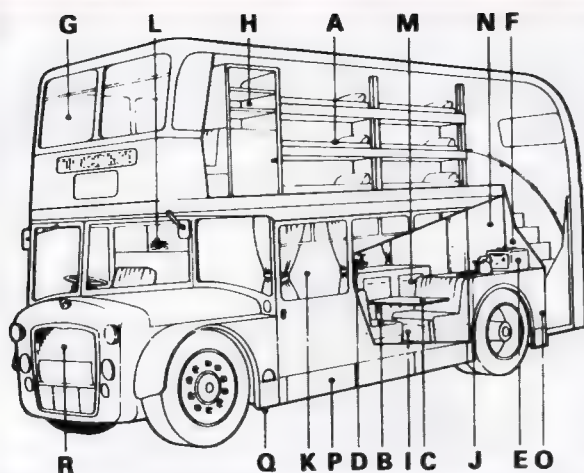
RICHARD DELAHOY/M. BATEMAN COLLECTION



Downtown Washington D.C. provides a backdrop to KNO 949C *Rafferty*, one of six FLFs exported to the US by Top Deck. Photographed in August 1983 three months after export, this Lodekka was sold to All-Pro Broadcasting, Los Angeles in late 1985.

M. E. RYE/M. BATEMAN COLLECTION





- A. Permanent bunks for sleeping and resting whilst travelling
- B. Ample seats (all seats are cloth inserted).
- C. All seats face a dining table.
- D. Sink with running water 120 litres (approx) water tank.
- E. Oven/grill.
- F. 4 gas burners for cooking.
- G. Sightseeing Deck for unparalleled views.
- H. Personal storage locker (1 per person).
- I. Food and storage space.
- J. Bench area for preparing food.
- K. Unobstructed views from all seats.
- L. Stereo and microphone.
- M. Fully equipped kitchen with pots, pans, cutlery etc.
- N. Storage locker for tools, spares, oil, anti-freeze.
- O. Spare Gas bottles.
- P. Diesel jerry can racks.
- Q. Modified ground clearance.
- R. Special radiator with oil cooler.

or as an extension of the Asia overland tour and then travel across the south of the country to Sydney via Kalgoorlie, Adelaide and Melbourne, the cost of the Australia part of the trip being a mere £183 plus £23 for food. The 21 day tour survived until the summer of 1987 while the Lodekka was sold locally the following year.



The pride of the current fleet, KGH 891A *Phoenix*, is seen on transfer duty at Dover Eastern Docks June 1992.

G. B. WISE

Below:

The early days at Richmond. Bristol KSW UHY 357 and an as yet unconverted Bristol LD UOD 485 stand either side of two LDs, one under maintenance and the other being converted into a deckerhome in October 1976.

ADRIAN SKILTON

Below right:

Bristol VRTSL OCS 594H *Costa*, converted for use as a transfer bus with a toilet and additional luggage lockers at the Epsom Derby, 1985.

ANDY IZATT

Lodekka operation

The company changed its legal name to Top Deck Travel in July 1983 after ten years of tours which had been enjoyed by over 65,000 young people. By this time operations, which had been established in Continental Pioneer's yard in Richmond, had moved to a new location in Surrey, Young Stroath Farm on Horsell Common near Woking, which was to be home to 23 ducks and six pigs as well as the fleet in the UK for many years. Additional storage was at Martlands Industrial Estate, Worplesdon but in early 1994 both sites were vacated in favour of secure storage in Fulham while maintenance and repairs were carried out at Lovelace Works off Ripley High Street. But with further fleet reductions imminent, these functions were also moved to Fulham in March of this year. A maintenance centre is also run by the company in Kathmandu, Nepal. Most of the Lodekkas owned have been Gardner or Bristol six-cylinder-engined LDs or FLFs. The Gardner was to prove much more durable and became a fleet standard, 90 TVX TC being the last bus with a Bristol unit. A notable exception was ex-Wilts & Dorset FLF JMR 818F *Leylandi* which, as its name might suggest, had a Leyland engine. However after repeated mechanical problems, like the remainder of the current fleet it now has a Gardner.

The older LDs, of which two remain, are used on the long overland runs through Europe and across Asia to Kathmandu because they have twelve-leaf springs and a stronger chassis frame, the result of cross-members which also provide additional support to the lower body. The springs on the flat-floored 'F' type FLF has fewer leafs and

its body is supported by a peripheral chassis frame which is more vulnerable and does not extend beyond the rear axle. As Paul Ludemann points out, with Asian road surfaces being what they are, broken springs are inevitable and an FLF could be brought to a halt in conditions where an LD would be able to continue without too much problem. Top Deck have also owned a handful of FSs. But a unique bus was a Crosville Bristol FSF, 892 VFM *Nafai* which unlike most of the fleet retained all its seats for transfer work and private hire.

On the road

Tour groups, which averaged in size at 18, were transferred from London and joined their bus at the channel ports enabling good progress to be made into Europe on the first day while keeping within driving-hours regulations. Top Deck's Lodekkas had a crew of two. A tour leader looked after the interests of the group while the driver/mechanic was responsible for the bus but in the early days it was not uncommon for both to share the driving. At the height of Lodekka operation it was usual for a driver to stay with a particular vehicle and get to know its strengths and weaknesses after first completing a trip as either a passenger or tour leader. Driving experience was especially important for both crew members on Asian tours as illness could be a problem.

Paul Ludemann remembers that driving in Asia required special skills, and Lodekkas were fitted with extra spotlights and air-horns for good reasons. Often only the middle of the road would be metalled and other vehicles would only move out of the way after a blast





Top Deck's Australian FLF, KPM 84E Moose was in immaculate condition when seen in Sydney in March 1982. The bus still runs in Australia for London Transport Bus Tours, Victoria and is registered BYL 650.

E. WALSH/M. BATEMAN COLLECTION

on the horn, but the real challenge came with on-coming traffic. An example was the road through Pakistan to Quetta heavily used by lorries, often Bedford J5s carrying sugar-beet. These would often be grossly overloaded by up to four times and the drivers knew that if they did leave the centre of the road they might well turn over. However an experienced Top Deck driver could deal with the situation by a deft swing of the steering wheel at the last moment around the on coming obstruction, but inevitably body panels were damaged as the sugar-beet would hang over the sides of the lorries by several feet. 'The will of Allah' meant that local driving could be colourful at times but if there was an accident, the police would be inclined to the view that foreigners, as incomers, must be to blame. After all, if they had not been there, there would have been no accident. Driving at dawn or dusk was particularly hazardous because of tired lorry drivers, while in the evening water-buffalo, would lie on the tarmac, which had been heated by the sun to warm themselves for the bitterly cold night ahead. The spotlights on the Lodekkas were invaluable in the dark as some local drivers would not use headlights for fear of consuming extra fuel while broken-down vehicles could also be picked out. No orange reflective-triangles here, just a candle!

Handy with a spanner

With the majority of the fleet back in the UK for the winter a full programme of preventative maintenance was carried out and this has included the complete rebuilding of vehicles suffering from structural fatigue by using new light-weight alloy framing. However, despite a thorough maintenance schedule occasional problems out on the road are inevitable especially with old buses. Complete engine rebuilds in the Indian countryside are not unknown and Paul Ludemann recalls one memorable occasion when PDL 517 *Drab* suffered a broken crankshaft six hours out of Delhi. A new crankshaft and block had to be flown out from the UK and the replaced units still reside under the veranda of a hotel in Pakistan. On another occasion the differential on an LD failed and while the passengers enjoyed the delights of a four-hour Indian film, the welding skills of local village craftsman were called upon to get the bus back on the road.

It is an unwritten rule and a matter of pride amongst Top Deck drivers that a Lodekka would return to the workshop in the UK in better condition than when it left but this was not always an easy task. In 1990 Paul was sent to Nepal to rescue ODL 12 (later APB 713A) *Slippers*, a Southern Vectis LD, which had been standing idle for three months after its original tour back to the UK was re-scheduled.

The driver had flown back to Australia so Paul had 10 days to make the bus roadworthy so that it could work a tour to England in time for its MOT. There were the usual problems to overcome such as dented body panels, broken headlights, (the consequence of a water-buffalo backing into the bus) and brakes which needed relining. Paul set about fixing these problems as well as re-tensioning the springs checking the front wheel bearings and the vacuum pump. Because the LD had been idle for several months its batteries had been swapped with a suspect set from another vehicle and the indicators had also been removed and these all had to be replaced locally, indicators being supplied from an Ambassador car. The tour left on time and Paul drove into India reaching Varanasi only for the bearings on one of the back wheels to fail. ODL 12's last driver had changed the oil in the differential after crossing flooded roads during the monsoons, but had not oiled the bearings. Damp had got in and they had rusted while the bus had been out of use. Calling Surrey proved to be of little help as a garage

90 TVX TC, OPC 48E *Gordon*, THN 262F *Ben*, SHN 254F *Gaswell* and EGM 276C *Crusader* await their parties at Calais for a new round of European tours in 1993. Both THN 262F and EGM 276C have had their roofs lowered to comply with height restrictions in some European countries.
PAUL LUDEMANN



fire had disconnected the phone. However in India there is always a 'fix it man', and a new set of bearings of exactly the correct specification were spirited up from nowhere and the bus duly went on its way.

Getting a bus back into Europe is a prime consideration as repairs become much easier to effect and on more than one occasion failed pistons have been removed, oil and fuel distribution to those cylinders blocked off and the bus driven the last few miles into Greece firing on the remaining cylinders. Of course some buses are more reliable than others and one which many of the drivers felt was jinxed was LDL 737 (later RGT 86V) *Plod*, one of the oldest LDs in the fleet dating from 1955. On one trip after repeated failures, the bus again came to a grinding halt within sight of the Zeebrugge ferry and home. For its long suffering driver, it was the last straw. He arranged for it to be towed to the ferry terminal, told the company what he had done and then promptly vanished without even picking up his wages.

Within Europe the logistics of providing spares is less daunting. Usually a replacement can be provided within 24 hours. On rare occasions this has even meant putting a replacement engine in the back of a van and driving it to the stricken vehicle. It makes sense for each bus to carry some spares, which are stored under the stairs. As well as a spare wheel a tool box and fuel, European vehicles can also carry fuel filters and electrical relays while those allocated to Asian work may have head gaskets, pistons, big-end bearings, starter motors and wheel studs which have a habit of popping out on sub-zero Asian nights during heavy braking.

Trying VRTs

In the early 1980s, after experiencing difficulty in obtaining Lodekkas, Top Deck experimented with Bristol VRTs which had bodywork better suited for conversion into deckerhomes and had the advantage of bringing the driver more into the group. The first to enter service was NGM 161G *Gobey*, in May 1982, but mechanical problems were to dog the seven ex-Scottish Bus Group buses operated with only five being fully converted. The most serious problem centred around the engine overheating in warm climates. Attempts to solve this, which included fitting air scoops, were unsuccessful and a further complication was additional heat generated from the kitchen area which also made life unpleasant for the passengers. The two exceptions were LFS 298F *Stretch*, one of two rare VRTLL types in the fleet and OCS 594H *Costa* both used on private hire and group transfers. The former was fitted with high-back seating while the latter had this arrangement upstairs but was fitted with a luggage locker and toilet on the lower deck,

its name being a reflection of the high cost of its conversion! OCS 599H *Hardy* was to be the most adventurous VRT completing a European tour that included Madrid, Istanbul and Berlin. However, sister vehicle LFS 285F *Laurel*, the other VRTLL, highlighted another problem when it grounded in Greece on the Corfu-Patras ferry. After covering a few more miles a ruptured water pipe brought it to a standstill. The decision to first down grade to transfer work and then dispose of the type was inevitable. Additional buses had to be bought to keep the active seven going and 30% of the company's maintenance cost was attributable to vehicles that represented only 11% of the fleet.

New markets

In 1987 Top Deck was bought by the company's five managers who, in turn, sold out to one of their number Murgha Mack in 1990. Today's tours and holidays reflect the different aspirations of young people in the 1990s who like to be more independent, like to fly, use hotels and hostels more and have less time available to travel. Africa and South America are now seen as the exciting places to go and in response an associated business Adventure South America has been established using D137 HHT, a 16-ton Mercedes truck rebuilt with a 26-seat passenger cabin and kitchen. The vehicle, nicknamed the big banana because of its yellow livery operates camping tours to Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. In Africa, Top Deck did try to establish a seven and fourteen day 'fly-in' programme in the late 1980s using German Army four-wheel-drive MAN trucks on local safaris. A brochure from that time apologises for the fact that deckerhomes are not used but goes on to explain that 'frankly, they're just not suited to smashing through jungle'. The company was to find that due to unrest in Kenya at the time, tourists stayed away, but since then a former Top Deck employee has established his own business in Zimbabwe using two ex-Top Deck FLFs, AUO 519B *Pig Pen* and THN 258F *Arfa*.

In Europe, Top Deck has seen the steady development of its Coach Camping Tours business established in the 1970s using Bristol MW6G and RELH6Gs touring Scandinavian

countries not open to the Lodekkas because of height restrictions. Today, a full European programme is offered and rather than use its own coaches, 6-8 year old, Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10Ms are hired from Dutch operator AMZ of Goes. Top Deck supplies drivers, tour guides and cooks and the big boots on the Volvos make them ideal for carrying camping equipment as well as tour members' personal luggage. During the winter the equipment is stored at a camp site near Amsterdam which is also home to Top Deck's last Bristol FS, RAG 409 *Rags*. This bus was originally Red & White's 6 EWO but took on the identity of a LD after an accident rebuild in 1980. During the summer it acts as an office and accommodation for a company representative.

Lodekka future

As Top Deck has diversified to meet demand, business for the Lodekkas has declined throughout the late-1980s and 1990s leading to the decision in 1995 to discontinue the European deckerhome programme at the end of the 1996 season. Other factors in the decision were the increasing difficulty of finding drivers qualified to handle crash gearboxes and stricter European emissions controls, although Top Deck have found European authorities surprisingly tolerant of what are seen as vintage vehicles. Another problem has been height restrictions applicable in some countries. Initially the company tried modifying springs and using lower-profile tyres to bring the height down but then settled for lowering the roof by about 4 inches. This was achieved by reducing the depth of the cove panels and the result was a bus with a very flat looking roof. Bristol FLF PBL 60F *Drought Breaker* was the first treated and there are still two examples in the surviving fleet, PDL 519 *Tadpoles* and EGM 276C *Crusader*. However height restrictions are not just confined to Europe, as driver Greg Byrne found out when he drove LD YHT 932, then called *Boobs*, under a low-bridge near Guildford in 1989. Unfortunately for Greg, the local Press were on hand to record the event! However, YHT 932 was in excellent condition at the time and Top Deck engineers set about re-building the upper deck and the bus duly re-emerged as *Hulk* giving the company several more years service. Despite these complications, the 1996

Three old timers await buyers in 1992. UOD 503 *Rox*, dating from 1957, had been with Top Deck since 1976. YHT 932 *Hulk*, also new in 1957, had been rebuilt after its 1989 low-bridge accident with about four inches removed from the upper-deck below the windows. LDL 736 *Befa*, a 1955 bus, had it over-all height reduced in more conventional Top Deck fashion by taking around four inches away from the roof cove panels.

ANDY IZATT



European programme will see a full range of tours from 16 days to the ten week Grand Tour taking in France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Holland. Because it is the last year Paul Ludemann says there has been no shortage of Top Deck drivers offering their services, keen to re-live the great days of the 1980s. It is fitting that the last European tour which returns on 6 December will be a 36-day trip to France, Portugal, Spain and Morocco as far as Meski Oasis in the Sahara recalling that pioneer journey in 1973. So does this mark the end of Lodekka operation? Well, not just yet.

PDL 519 *Tadpoles*, which in 1988, became one of the buses extensively rebuilt by the company, has undergone preparation for the new season at Ripley. PDL 517 *Drab* now fitted with a 6LX engine and twin fuel tanks wintered in Kathmandu and started its return journey on 23 March and was set to reach the UK on 12 June but its future with the company will depend on the level of next year's bookings as the days of the long overland tour are nearing an end. Fewer and fewer young people are showing interest in this type of holiday. Top Deck's competitors on the route, Dragoman, Exodus and Encounter Overland use Bedford or Mercedes truck-based vehicles, despite using the same roads. Some of these have canvas roofs, which is fine in a hot climate, but, as Paul Ludemann points out, can offer little protection in the cold and wet unlike a warm Lodekka. The only road that the Bristols could not negotiate was the route to Srinagar in the Kashmir because of low clearance in a tunnel. Local buses were used instead and often became the talking point of the trip! Civil unrest means that Srinagar is now off-limits, but Top Deck has had to deal with this kind of problem before. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan necessitated a re-routing with one tour just crossing the border into Iran unaware that tanks were rolling into Kabul behind them. The Iran-Iraq war severed the route altogether for several years. Tour groups had to be flown from Turkey to Pakistan where they joined one of the company's Lodekkas trapped on the other side of the conflict. However, with unrest in eastern Turkey as well, demand for the Asia overland trips is increasingly limited but five-week tours through India are offered visiting Goa and Bombay before finally reaching Madras and these are additionally

Top Deck Bristol Lodekka Fleet 1996

Reg	Name	Type	Original Owner	Note
PDL 517	Drab	LD6GLX	Southern Vectis	
PDL 519	Tadpoles	LD6GLW	Southern Vectis	1
RAG 409	Rags	FS6GLW	Red & White	4
90 TVX	TC	FLF6GLX	Eastern National	
KGH 891A	Phoenix	FLF6GLX	Bristol	7
EGM 276C	Crusader	FLF6GLX	Central SMT	1,2
LWC 665C	Loft	FLF6GLX	Eastern National	
EDV 528D	Edgar	FLF6GLX	Western National	
FLJ 155D	Deep Purple	FLF6GLX	Hants & Dorset	
GSG 208D	Sniffer	FLF6GLX	Eastern Scottish	2
HPN 79D	Freckle	FLF6GLX	Brighton & Hove	
OGC 165D	Camel	FLF6GLX	Brighton & Hove	5
OVX 297D	Viking	FLF6GLW	Eastern National	
STW 763D	Rush	FLF6GLW	Eastern National	
STW 765D	Stew	FLF6GLW	Eastern National	
OPC 48E	Gordon	FLF6GLX	Brighton & Hove	6
MAH 494E	Narelle	FLF6GLX	Eastern Counties	
JMR 818F	Leylandi	FLF6GLX	Wilts & Dorset	
SHN 254F	Gaswell	FLF6GLX	United	
WVX 527F	Da Bus	FLF6GLX	Eastern National	2,3
WWC 743F	Acko	FLF6GLX	Eastern National	2,3

Note

- 1 Height reduced to 4 metres.
- 2 32 foot chassis.
- 3 Semi-automatic gearbox.
- 4 Orig. reg. 6 EWO.
- 5 Orig. reg. JPM 80D.
- 6 Orig. reg. KPM 83E.
- 7 Orig. reg. 804 SHW, subsequently ADE 146A.

being promoted through Top Deck's Egypt brochure.

With the completion of European tours, Top Deck plans to retain between four and six of the FLFs to cover private hire work such as charters to the Munich Beer Festival and maintain the UK programme of four seven-day tours which have become increasingly popular in recent years. Land's End, John O'Groats, Scotland and Wales all feature on the itinerary, which will keep four of the buses busy. The two semi-automatics in the fleet, WWC 743F *Acko* and WVX 527F *Da Bus*, which had been less reliable on European work have proved their value in the UK and will be retained but the final decision will not be taken until the end of the 1996 season. Paul Ludemann has little doubt that the remaining stock will find homes, as there have been enquiries from several companies including a TV station looking for a bus for promotional use. Top Deck has access to a plentiful supply of spares. As well as engines, gearboxes and differentials, the company stores seats, windows and back-doors. It has fibre glass

moulds for engine cowl and mud guards while aluminium body panels can be cut to order. In fact the biggest expense is having to replace tachographs which have proved to be a lot less sturdy than the buses.

Top Deck has adapted well to the changing needs of its customers with offices in London and Sydney and a thriving flight shop and travel agency business amongst its other interests. There is still a lot of affection for the old buses amongst those in the company that knew them and for the young people who travelled on them they represented freedom, but perhaps Top Deck can be best summed up from the opening lines of the 1988/89 Worldwide Adventures brochure. 'Some day you'll have a nice, sensible family, live in a nice, sensible house and have a nice, sensible holiday . . . Some day.'

Thanks go to Paul Ludemann for a fascinating insight into the Top Deck spirit, and to Paul Fox, Maurice Bateman and Adrian Skilton for valuable background information on the company.

ODL 12 *Slippers* takes a break in Lisbon by the banks of the Tagus River in June 1984.

RICHARD BUTLER



How to mend your Routemaster, another Heyday and more fleetbooks

THE HEYDAY OF THE BUS

YORKSHIRE

GEOFF LUMB. IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING. 233mm x 185mm. 80pp £11.99

Last month we had occasion to be less than kind to a recent volume in this series, and it is good to be able to record that the next, on Yorkshire, redeems it. To those who know him, Geoff Lumb is immediately associated with dogged determination, and he has used this quality to good effect in this book, both in finding the photos and in unearthing the information to caption them — even if the little headlines he uses to preface each caption are sometimes a little on the obscure side. Or is that the reviewer's fault for having been brought up on t' wrong side o' t' Pennines?

Talking of t' wrong side o' t' Pennines, one of the photos (whisper it!) was taken in Lancashire; it shows the Slaidburn bus, as we always knew it, in the station yard at Clitheroe, but is justified by its destination being across the border, and as it brought memories flooding back of wonderful trips through glorious scenery on that very bus, well, we're not going to complain. That, after all is what these Heyday books are all about.

There are just one or two photos which are slightly less sharp than one would like; but most of them are quite superb, sharp, with good colour rendition — and after all Yorkshire boasted probably one of the most colourful bus scenes anywhere in the early-1960s, when most of these pictures were taken, so this is important. Many of the best pictures are by the author himself, and really recall Yorkshire of 35 years ago; there are so many gems in here that it is hard to decide what to highlight, though a shot of a West Yorkshire Bristol SUL passing through Haworth before the tourists got to it was particularly outstanding, as was one of a Hanson AEC Regal III rebuild heading out into the hills around Huddersfield. If you have any Yorkshire blood in you, or any feel for the Yorkshire scene, you will not fail to be impressed by this book.

STEPHEN MORRIS

BUS HANDBOOKS

MERSEYSIDE & CHESHIRE

NORTH & WEST MIDLANDS

BRITISH BUS PUBLISHING. A5 format. £9.95 each

Forty seven fleets are listed in the latest offering from British Bus Publishing which maintains the excellent standard of production we have come to expect from books in the series. The considerable variety of operators in Merseyside and Cheshire is well represented in its 112pp, including Aintree Coachline with its Foden and the Grand Edwardian Touring Co as well as the big names like North Western and MTL. A commendable feature of the latter's listing is the inclusion of all that operators subsidiaries including those in London.

Fifty eight fleets are listed in the 132pp North & West Midlands Handbook, another valuable addition to the series with plenty of high quality photos often highlighting unusual vehicles or new deliveries. It is good to see less usual operations such as National Car Parks at Birmingham International Airport included and the vehicle index at the back of these books acts as a useful point of reference as well. Both are useful addition to the bookshelves.

British Bus Publishing's handbooks are available from the Ian Allan Bookshops in Birmingham, London and Manchester or, in case of difficulty, direct, post free, from British Bus Publishing, 16 St Margaret's Drive, Wellington, Shropshire TF1 3PH, tel/fax 01952 255669; Visa and Mastercard are accepted, as well as cheques.

ANDY IZATT



FODEN

MY LIFE WITH THE COMPANY

HAROLD NANCOLLIS. VENTURE PUBLICATIONS. 164pp. £19.95.

Foden is best known as a builder of trucks, initially using steam power and then in the early 1930s switching with some reluctance to diesel. It was in 1937, when diesel had not long ousted the smell of steam, that Harold Nancollis joined Foden as an apprentice. He stayed with the company through good times and bad for a remarkable 45 years, retiring in 1982. His career spanned a lengthy spell in the drawing office and culminated in the post of service manger.

There are few people in the commercial vehicle business who can boast of 45 years with the same company, and it gives Harold Nancollis an unusual insight into how Foden and its models developed over the years. The company's postwar two-stroke diesel, for example, was developed against a background of concern about the ability of Gardner to meet a rapidly-growing demand for engines.

Foden was, of course, primarily a truck builder. It dabbled in buses in the early 1930s — and even built one double-deck chassis. But after the war its first new models were passenger rather than goods chassis, and these featured full-width bonnets and concealed radiators which made all other bus manufacturers' products look distinctly dated.

Harold Nancollis discusses the development of these models, and of the advanced rear-engined single-decker which followed. A photograph of the rear-engined chassis shows a vehicle which was at least 10 years ahead of its time. Later front-engined truck-derived buses get a brief mention, and the Foden NC, the company's last passenger chassis, is also covered with the intriguing comment that there were signs 'one of the six passenger transport operators currently evaluating the Foden NC passenger vehicle would eventually place a substantial order'. The reader is left to guess which one.

The greater part of this book is, as one might expect, devoted to trucks — but buses are given adequate coverage in relation to their importance, with a good selection of photographs of all types from the 1933 double-decker to the Foden NC. It's a readable story, with a sense of the shock which greeted the news that the company was heading for receivership in 1980. But the changes which followed the take-over of Foden by the American Paccar company surely merit more than the five short paragraphs which bring the story to a rather sudden end.

If your interest in vehicles embraces trucks, this book is a fine reminder of the sheer variety which Foden produced in the years up to 1980. But it still leaves the field clear for someone to write a comprehensive account of Foden's activities in the bus business.

STEWART J. BROWN

ROUTEMASTER

MAINTENANCE MANUAL

C & G WALKER. A CREAM BAND PUBLICATION. 172pp £48 (plus £4.25 p&p)

This new publication came out last autumn and is interestingly subtitled 'How it Works. How to Keep it Working'. Graham Walker is himself familiar with the Routemaster as he is the former LT Mechanical Engineer — Development. It is produced in A4 in a ring binder allowing for further updates and/or additional information to be included at a later date.

It is basically a re-write of the original 1960s Maintenance Bulletin No 47, the original Routemaster manual which has not been available for several years. All three original sections, for mechanical, electrical and bodywork, are combined into one volume. However this has been supplemented with useful snippets of information and it is believed that there are plans in future for a second edition which will be further expanded with additional material generated from the first edition.

Within the mechanical section there is a chapter for the few vehicles that have been sold outside London with the Iveco engine. The electrical section lacks some useful circuit diagrams but again it is understood that further information is to be published by the authors shortly.

Over 90 illustrations (no photographs) have been (mostly) redrawn and some are now spaced within the text rather than all together at the end as in the previous LT-style manual. Some particularly useful additional information is included, such as a guide to which belts go with which alternator and charging equipment. However the Iveco equivalents are curiously absent. There is even mention of the fact that nitrogen can be used to charge the accumulators; this was not used by LT itself but by operators outside London.

Your reviewer did find a few comments with which he did not agree but, on the whole, for the basic Routemaster, there is little else that one can add, although details of differences on RMC, RCL, RMF and RMA-types (such as doors, air suspension and fluorescent lighting) have not been included but are occasionally mentioned in passing.

The manual is aimed at the experienced mechanic, with plenty of technical language; don't expect it to be like a 'Haynes' car manual. However despite the price it is invaluable for any Routemaster operator, a must for any owner and is thoroughly recommended. Does anybody know where I can obtain the tools referred to by LT part numbers? ANDREW MORGAN

This manual is available from C & G Walker, PO Box 266, Twickenham TW2 5XR.

MORE EFE VRs

EFE's new Bristol VR casting was described in *Buses* April, and two more which have come our way are a Greater Manchester Series 2 and a Badgerline Series 3. It would seem that the glazing has been changed subtly since the East Yorkshire one, as neither suffers from the incorrect flush glazing and both have mouldings representing opening front windows.

The Greater Manchester one is finished in the last livery carried by the type, the 'Jaffa Cake' white, orange and brown. Detailing is quite superb, with appropriate route details. The lack of white rubbers to the windows is less of a problem here, as the upper deck windows are in a white area anyway, as is the lower-deck rear window, and the windscreen is carefully picked out in white, as are the destination boxes. It captures the Greater Manchester vehicles superbly well.

The Badgerline bus is in the new Deregulation Series. The front dash panel and engine compartment are completely new castings, giving quite a different look from the VRT2, and creating the Series 3 effect very well indeed. Other details, such as the air intake grilles between the decks are picked out using EFE's paint process and are quite accurate. The yellow and green Badgerline livery, fleetnames and logos are all correct. The only slight quibble is that on our model the front wheels seemed marginally too widespread. Altogether though this VR model is very convincing and a welcome addition to the range. Guide price: c £11. STEPHEN MORRIS

GREYHOUND

A PICTORIAL TRIBUTE TO AN

AMERICAN ICON

ALEX ROGGERO WITH TONY BEADLE. OSPREY AUTOMOTIVE. 285mm x 215mm. £12.99

This is what many more bus books should look like. London-based photographer Alex Roggero has put together a high quality 128-page coffee-table-style book which, with Tony Beadle's help, tells the story of one of the world's biggest names in coach operation from its modest beginnings in Minnesota to the present day, lacing together a highly readable account of Greyhound's history and its many distinctive coaches.

It's an almost legendary story that starts with founder Carl Eric Wickman carrying miners for 15 cents each in a Hupmobile car he was unable to sell, through its

glory days of the thirties and forties before airlines took much of its business and on through the more recent decades of decline and perpetual restructure.

It's a story told with affection and authority that captures the essential atmosphere, the very romance of North American long distance coach travel. There are some excellent archive and up-to-date illustrations not just of the often innovative coaches, but the magnificent art deco Greyhound buildings and also the people who have used the coaches and worked on them. It's laced with some fine magazine advertisements and all but a handful of archive pictures are in colour. Alex Roggero's own photographs, sometimes quirky, always impressive, set a standard that authors and publishers of books on less glamorous bus topics could do well to emulate.

ALAN MILLAR

PJR/KERICO ROUTEMASTER

1/160th scale £2.99

Model buses seem to come in all shapes and sizes these days. There was a time when such things were regarded as 'toys' but I'd better say, before the lynch-mob gathers outside the editorial office, that I do appreciate that collecting model buses is now a very serious hobby enjoyed by many. All the same it is quite refreshing to be asked to review something that is designed to be fun and makes no claims to be anything otherwise.

The Routemaster 'N' scale model available from PJR Marketing was originally sold as a promotional gift but has become increasingly popular with railway enthusiasts. It is not difficult to see why because these fun little models actually capture the 'character' of a Routemaster in a way that can be said to be sadly lacking from certain bigger, supposedly more 'serious' counterparts. Currently they are available in red or green but PJR says that they are in production for a full-liveried white with multi-coloured stripes version for Stagecoach.

These little buses are great fun. I found they make quite good paper-weights as well and they're good value. In this day and age there are plenty of more expensive ways to bring a smile to someone's face. PJR Marketing is at PO Box 1303, Bancroft, Milton Keynes, MK13 0YZ. Tel: 01908 225699. ANDY IZATT



ANDY IZATT

THE PEAKBUS SAGA

JOHN CASH takes a personal look at Peakbus, the little Chesterfield independent that tried to do all the right things but which was finally brought low by the worst excesses of on-street competition

Buses March 1995 carried an article by Tony Peart and Michael Fowler on events in Derbyshire, principally Chesterfield, concerning the first year of operation by Peakbus, a small operation running a couple of school contracts and two routes in competition with Chesterfield Transport. In a generally upbeat and characteristically well-observed account the writers noted the response of the established operator to a new competitor and concluded by saying that future developments were awaited with keen interest and that on the evidence of its first year Peakbus was unlikely to disappoint us. Twelve months on and the situation in Chesterfield has changed considerably.

Tony Peart and Michael Fowler observed in their article that relations between Chesterfield Transport and Peakbus were

acrimonious and whilst Chesterfield's concerns about competition were entirely understandable the often expressed view of its staff that Peakbus 'had no right' to be competing with them was symptomatic of a basic failure to understand the workings of the current Transport Act that was to lead to a series of events which did nothing to help the image of the bus industry in the eyes of the public, even if it did provide considerable interest and even amusement to bus enthusiasts.

A personal interest

My own involvement with Peakbus was the result of a chance phone call asking for help in covering a school contract journey one day. As this involved a journey from Bonsal to Wirksworth in a part of the Peak District which was my home for several years I readily agreed. My observations of Peakbus's fleet at the time was of a small number of elderly vehicles immaculately turned out and a credit to their owners having obviously had a great deal of time and money spent on them and which were being operated in a proper and responsible manner. My one-off school

contract journey soon developed into a regular habit which I quite enjoyed indulging. However on very rare occasions I would be prevailed upon to help out during the day on service 29 in Chesterfield, something that I did not enjoy at all.

Street fighting

At this stage Chesterfield Transport was operating duplicate buses running to Peakbus timings in an attempt to prevent Peakbus from carrying any passengers. In addition to this, a small handful of drivers were turning short, missing out sections of routes, blocking bus stops, double parking, and indulging in every practice possible to assist that aim, including driving practices which were by any standards extremely dangerous. They were using CB radios to ensure that bus stops were blocked, a practice which was in fact counter productive since it offended a significant number of passengers and led to numerous complaints.

Passenger response was mixed and varied between the two routes. On service 27 a regular clientèle had been built up who were extremely loyal to Peakbus and would refuse to board a Chesterfield Transport vehicle, which would in any case be as likely as not a Chesterfield Omnibus-liveried Leyland National, and there was considerable confusion among older customers who had no idea which bus was which. Similarly there were others who would only get on what they believed to be a 'Corporation' bus. Support was spilt roughly equally and so the one Peakbus vehicle required to operate the route took healthy loads whereas a similar number of customers were carried by the two, and often three Chesterfield vehicles competing. Route 29 was different in that passengers tended simply to get on the first bus that came along and therefore the Peakbus vehicle was at a disadvantage.

Peakbus ECW-bodied Bristol LHS FBV 272W, which had been new to Ribble, leaves Elder Way in Chesterfield bound for Newbold on service 29 in early 1995.

A. R. KAYE



Fighting back

The Peakbus reaction to the unequivocally stated aim to 'run them off the road' was to go on the attack and so in quick succession two further routes were registered, the 55 between the town centre and North Wingfield and the 36 between town and Holme Hall, starting respectively in March and May 1995. Both routes required one bus each to operate, the 36 being designed to operate between morning and afternoon school runs. The 55 competed on a corridor also served by Trent and thanks to the efforts of a regular dedicated driver it quickly built up a loyal following, although the fact that the fare was less than half that charged by Chesterfield may have had some bearing.

The 36 performed less well, but by now the view of the proprietors of Peakbus was that its purpose was not to make money but simply to annoy Chesterfield Transport. Certainly the Chesterfield response was to register a competing service which only succeeded in competing with itself and the strategy of swamping the competition must of been costing a small fortune.

A bridge too far

Unfortunately for Peakbus expansion was proving that it brings its own problems particularly when elderly vehicles are expected to operate intensive services. However well-maintained they are, they need continued attention and when, of necessity, that attention is supplied by outside contractors it is very expensive. Tony Peart and Michael Fowler's article mentioned a preserved fleet as a source of vehicles and some of these did indeed find their way to Chesterfield and one, the ex-Llandudno Dennis Pax, actually entered service, unfortunately without being repainted. In its drab all-over blue it quickly became known as the 'prison van' and due to its very high entrance step was not popular with passengers.

The various Leyland Leopards ran through a series of expensive engine and transmission failures and both of the original LHSs began to give trouble. However an LHS which did sterling service for a while was the famous VOD 124K. The main reason for the preserved fleet not becoming operational was simply the logistics of preparing and testing before vehicles could be used and this led to the hiring of a series of buses from Nottingham and Manchester during July 1995.

By this time the Derbyshire County Council contract for the Buxton operation had been terminated, as were the remaining school contracts at the start of the new school year in September by which time my own involvement had ceased. The Peakbus O-licence expired at the end of August and a

Seen working a special service in the summer of 1995 in conjunction with local Dronfield area chapel and churches, which were holding a flower festival, is Peakbus Marshall-bodied Bristol LHS VOD 124K which worked for about nine months.

A. R. KAYE



A rare bus in the Peakbus fleet was ex-tuition Seddon-bodied Seddon RY/236, BWS 100L. It ran for about three months and is seen on the 29 Newbold service.

A. R. KAYE



WTC 868K, one of three Rossendale Leyland Leopards bought by Peakbus from Green Bus, Great Wyrley climbs Grange Hill on its way to Bakewell to operate a school contract in March 1995.

A. R. KAYE



renewal application was made, operation therefore continuing perfectly properly on the old licence, pending the grant of a new one. As was widely reported during this period, Chesterfield Transport was in the process of being sold, allegedly being in danger of having to cease trading. The acrimony if anything intensified with Chesterfield keeping up a steady stream of correspondence to interested parties about the allegedly illegal and/or improper practices of Peakbus whilst conveniently ignoring the activities of some of its own staff. One might be forgiven for supposing that none of this could continue for much longer, and indeed it is true that Chesterfield Transport began to get its act together operationally, being no doubt far more gainfully occupied by turning its attentions to the ramifications of becoming part of the Stagecoach empire. Peakbus, on the other hand, was by now firmly caught in the downward spiral of struggling to maintain services with unsuitable or worn-out vehicles and as yet with no decision made on its licence renewal.

A last stand

In September two structurally and mechanically sound, but excessively tatty looking Bristol REs had entered service with only their front panels painted whilst retaining their Evans of Tredegar livery. By mid-October one was out of use and the other was delicensed at the end of November, needing far more expenditure than was feasible. A Bristol LH coach was purchased from Express of Hulland and again used without repainting.

The once immaculate turnout was conspicuously absent and it was common practice to fail to operate routes due to a shortage of vehicles. Four months after the expiry of the O-l licence the renewal was refused, and there the story might have ended. But . . .

Some readers may not be aware of the number of changes there have been in traffic area boundaries in recent years. Once upon a time Chesterfield fell inside the Yorkshire Traffic Area, which was combined with part of the Northern Traffic Area to form the North East Traffic Area. Then for some obscure reason Chesterfield was transferred to the North West Traffic Area, despite being on the wrong side of the Pennines. Peakbus had now been refused an operator's licence in this Area. However, Messrs Seddon & Millson also hold an O-l licence in the North East Traffic Area with an operating base in County Durham trading as North Pennine and so continued to operate Peakbus services 27, 29 and 55 (36 having been withdrawn the previous summer) with North Pennine discs in the windscreens, whilst an application for a new North East licence with an operating base at Handsworth, Sheffield was made.

As the early months of 1996 progressed Service 55 was 'sold' and is, at the time of writing, being operated by one or other of a pair of Leyland Nationals claiming to be 'on hire' to Peakbus and displaying a North Pennine O-l licence disc. Peakbus, after a few days of operating ex-Islywn Dodge G08 D409 NUH until it attracted a prohibition notice, was down to one operational vehicle,

Leyland Leopard WTJ 903L, covering Service 27. By mid-March this bus was operating from a lay-by on the A61 road just south of Chesterfield. It failed to operate during the week commencing 18 March and Peakbus in Chesterfield apparently faded quietly away, the two regular drivers having their employment terminated.

Victims of the system

This has been ultimately a sad little story. What began as an optimistic and bright enterprise, trying very hard to do everything properly, has failed. What was once a professionally run traditional bus service, in the old sense of the word, has failed. Both have failed because in the final analysis neither operator could cope with the situation they found themselves in, but in my view the biggest failure of all has been the way the public has been failed by a system which is supposed to be to their advantage and for their protection.

Events in Chesterfield over the last two years have proved that it is possible to operate buses outside the law and get away with it. It is possible to intimidate your competitors, to ignore the timetable, to divert services off their registered routes at will. It is possible to operate without properly maintaining your vehicles and to go on doing these things for months and months on end. This is not in the best interests of the bus industry and it is the responsibility of all of us to try to ensure that things change. I await the next Transport Act with interest.

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Arrow

TAKES A BOW

STEPHEN MORRIS reports further on Dennis's new double-decker and gives some impressions of it

Two months ago we were reporting on the demise of the model which put Dennis back into the UK market, the Dominator. Within a couple of weeks or so of the last Dominators appearing on the streets of Guildford Dennis's new double-decker model, the Arrow, had been launched, with 10 East Lancs-bodied buses going to London & Country, two with Northern Counties to Nottingham and two more ordered, a Northern Counties-bodied demonstrator had taken to the road and another four had been ordered out of a stock build of 20 with Northern Counties bodywork.

When first shown at Coach & Bus '95 last year Dennis's new double-decker was just an addition to the Lance range, Dennis's full-size single-deck citybus which had been launched at the same event four years earlier. At that time it had been stated that the Lance would develop into a double-decker, and in effect the Arrow is a double-deck version of the Lance.

Traditionally chassis conceived as single-deckers and used as double-deckers have been something of a compromise; today's Volvo Olympian certainly stands above other double-deck offerings as having been intended from the start as a double-decker, which shows in its ride quality and general fitness for the purpose. How then does the Arrow stack up in comparison?

The double-deck experience

Dennis certainly has a head start over Continental manufacturers offering chassis for double-deck use in that it is well steeped in double-deck tradition. It built over 1,000 Dominators and has built some 1,300 Condors and Dragons for export. It also built the front-engined Jubilant double-decker for export markets, though plans to offer it on the home market foundered.

The Arrow certainly shows something of this pedigree, although the rear of the lower-deck saloon betrays the chassis' single-deck origins. There is a substantial step up over the rear axle which is less of a problem on a single-decker than it is on a double-decker; single-deckers have much more headroom than the lower deck of a double-decker, and having compared three different Arrows — the first Nottingham coach-seated one, a bus-seated demonstrator, both with Northern Counties Palatine II bodywork, the other with coach seating and East Lancs bodywork for London & Country — this step up is a problem. Lower-deck headroom suddenly diminishes and there is a danger for anyone over about 5ft 10in banging their head on the saloon ceiling as they step up. East Lancs has tried to get around it with a device similar to that used on its amazing double-deck Scania K92s built for Maidstone some 10 years ago, using a recess in the ceiling over the step, suitably soft trimmed to cushion the blow.

Various seating layouts are offered, including all forward facing seats. Here again

though the rear end necessitates something of a compromise if that option is specified; the seats over the rear wheelarches engender a rather uncomfortable knees-up position. East Lancs' solution on the London & Country vehicles seems rather better, with back-to-back seats over the rear wheelarches. For a double-decker the Arrow has a longish rear overhang and as a result the rear-facing seats have rather more legroom than is usual with this type of layout, giving a comfortably spacious effect.

One wonders whether the desire for all forward-facing seats is a real one, or whether it is born more out of a need to offer something a little different, that other builders can't offer. In the real world, side-facing or back-to-back seats over the rear wheelarches would seem to offer a more practical layout.

The other compromise usually comes in ride quality; chassis built primarily for single-deck use can bounce and sway alarmingly when fitted with double-deck bodywork. Here Dennis's experience has come into play and on a ride and drive session based on Beaulieu in Hampshire, giving a fairly lengthy journey in different Arrows and involving some fairly spirited running the ride quality was excellent. The wallow and roll which can be experienced on a double-decker simply wasn't there; indeed the ride quality seemed a notable improvement over an air-sprung Dominator and almost on a par with the class-leading Olympian. Having thrown the bus through a few roundabouts (suitably clear of other traffic!) on full throttle to see what the effect was, the bus took it completely in its stride. There was hardly any tendency for the body to heel over and the bus held rigidly to the line intended in a most impressive fashion.

Overall impressions

Indeed the bus generally impressed. It has the capability of carrying 100 passengers, which may seem a bit much for the 8.3 litre Cummins C-series. However while at one time swept volume was everything in a bus engine, this is no longer so much the case. Power and torque outputs from modern diesel engines have increased dramatically, as is evidenced by the capacity of Cummins' little B-series six-litre engine for hard work.

The C-series as fitted to the Arrow is a Euro 2 engine. Reaching the required emission levels has meant an increase in power for most manufacturers, in Cummins' case on the B-series and C-series without recourse to electronic fuel injection. That means that in the Javelin coach one can now have an output of 300bhp from the C-series, though the engine for the Arrow is lower rated, at 245bhp. That represents some 30% more power than that produced by engines in the 10-11-litre bracket not very long ago, admittedly at a rather faster 2,200rpm; in earlier days 2,000rpm was considered fast revving for a decent bus engine.

The first Dennis Arrow in service with Nottingham City Transport. It has Northern Counties bodywork and appeared at Coach & Bus '95. It was used at first on park-&-ride work.

G. H. F. ATKINS



Arrow specification

Engine: Cummins C-series six-cylinder 8.3litre turbocharged and aftercooled Euro 2 diesel, 245bhp @ 2,200rpm; 1,025Nm torque @ 1,400rpm.

Transmission: ZF 4HP500 four-speed fully-automatic gearbox with integral retarder. 5HP500 five-speed unit optional.

Axes: Front: GKN I-beam, rated at 6.3tonnes; rear: Eaton single-reduction hypoid axle; ratio 4.88:1, rated at 10.5tonnes. GKN S-cam drum brakes, full air actuation and non-asbestos linings. Spigot-mounted 7.5in x 22.5in wheels. ZF integral power steering.

Suspension: Full air, two 254mm diameter air bags at front, two 330mm diameter air bags at rear, mounted on trailing taperleaf springs. Two double-acting dampers at the front, four at the rear.

Chassis dimensions: 10,180mm long by 2,486mm wide; 5,050mm wheelbase, 2,310 front overhang, 2,810mm rear overhang.

Gross vehicle weight: 16,800kg.

But surely a smaller engine cannot produce the torque? Well, again the C-series is impressive; 1,025Nm is available at 1,400rpm, which is 756lb ft for unregenerate imperialists like me, and still a respectable figure by any double-deck standards. Again 500lb/ft would have been a respectable figure from an 11-litre engine 20 years ago, albeit at slower revs.

Gearboxes are the well-proven ZF 4HP500 four-speed fully automatic with integral retarder, with the option of its five-speed equivalent, the 5HP500, where higher road speeds are needed. This driveline provided quite superb performance, admittedly without those 100 passengers on board; acceleration was commendably swift though very steady. The initial take-off did not give the impression that it was going to unseat passengers, yet there was always the feeling of enough acceleration to meet most eventualities, and on a lightly laden bus there felt to be much in reserve.

Also impressive were the noise levels. Euro 2 regulations do not just legislate on gaseous emissions, they also set standards for drive-by noise and the Cummins C-series in its latest form is a reasonably quiet unit. Dennis has not had to recourse to undertrays, encapsulation or other fiendish plots to achieve those noise levels. Dennis is very proud of having eliminated any need for angle drives — indeed it seems to have become something of an obsession — and while this has a notable effect on the overall weight of the bus, it also has its advantages in eliminating a potential source of noise, fairly unpleasant noise at that in many cases. Thus noise levels throughout the bus are low; there's a fair amount of noise from under the rear seat downstairs but not enough to drown out conversation, and not as much as on some bigger-engined chassis. Upstairs at the front is a very restful place to be, with very little noise and a comfortable, cossetting ride.

Numerically the first of London & Country's Dennis Arrows, AD1, in service in Crawley in May.

B. M. GILBERT

On the road

I drove one of the London & Country vehicles and the Northern Counties demonstrator, and the two were in many respects like chalk and cheese, though both shared the same quiet, sure-footed and rapid performance. The Northern Counties body offered excellent all round visibility with its huge windscreen. Switchgear seemed well-placed; a large lever on the steering column provides windscreen wiper controls and indicators, mainbeam and headlamp flash. Unusually these days it is placed on the righthand side of the steering column, a little confusing when most other vehicle builders outside Japan put indicator controls on the left. An intermittent wipe was appreciated on a drizzly, showery day, at least on the Northern

Counties bus which gave a driving environment in tune with the 1990s, somewhere where few could complain at having to spend a shift of eight hours or more.

The East Lancs bus created quite a contrast. Whereas the Northern Counties body was finished around the front end with nicely-shaped mouldings in a light shade of grey, the East Lancs had slab-like fittings in a very forbidding dark brown, which made the whole thing seem gloomy and dark. The windscreen was much smaller and fitted into a recess which didn't really seem to be made for it. Presumably the screen was made to be standard with Park Royal-bodied Leyland Atlanteans in the London & Country fleet, a laudable aim were it not for the facts firstly that the main purpose of a windscreen is not to be a joy to the storekeeper's heart but for drivers to see where they are going, and, secondly, that the Park Royal body was designed over 25 years ago and times move on. That, coupled with unsightly bolts sticking into the cab to hold the mirrors on and the fact that though Dennis's wiper control still had the intermittent position, the East Lancs contribution did not stretch as far as such a frippery, gave the impression of driving a 1990s bus with a 1970s body on it. Visibility was poor compared with the Northern

Counties, there were blind spots caused by the parts of the body which didn't line up with the windscreen and the cab felt forbidding and claustrophobic.

The East Lancs body suffered more in this last respect as Dennis is evaluating different steering wheels for the Arrow. The Northern Counties-bodied vehicle was fitted with a neat little affair from the Dart, whereas the East Lancs cab was filled with a standard full-size wheel, in order to gauge reaction. On the road there was little difference; somehow the small wheel seemed much handier, though the larger wheel gave marginally more feeling of confidence in the vehicle. There was little in it, and it seems likely that most drivers, not given the choice, would find the small wheel quite acceptable and would welcome the more spacious, and indeed, more modern, effect it gives to the cab. Dennis wanted to know our reaction and my vote goes firmly to the smaller wheel — even as a traditionalist probably more at home in the cab of a Leyland PD2! In both cases the power steering was fine, well-weighted and giving a good sense of being in control of the bus, even when encountering some crosswinds on the open road, a situation where weaknesses in power steering systems are soon shown up, particularly with a slab-sided double-decker.

The brakes too were good; initial pedal application applied the gearbox's in-built retarder, which was adequate for slowing the bus in most situations. An organ-pedal type footbrake valve is fitted, which can give rather an abrupt stop, but if used lightly allowed smooth stops. The gearbox of course was typical of ZF's automatics; just push a button and go. Change quality was excellent, almost imperceptible, with changes taking place at appropriate speeds. All told it was a remarkably well-sorted bus, and a pleasure to drive — even with that gloomy East Lancs cab!

Passengers on the other hand would probably be quite happy with either bus; the Northern Counties had the more cheerful interior, but presumably London & Country can be blamed for the dull browns inside the East Lancs one.



Arrow specifications

Like the Lance, and unlike the Dominator, the Arrow is a welded steel structure, with common modules for front and rear, the front including the front axle, steering gear, cab, controls etc, the rear containing engine, gearbox, radiator and rear axle, with a straightforward ladder chassis in between. An unusual feature of the chassis, shared with the Lance, is a pair of Z-shaped members above the front axle, delineating the edge of the wheelarches for the bodybuilder and determining the throat width through that area. Outriggers give a pick-up point for bodybuilders, while the frame is flat-topped to make their job easier.

The modular approach is typical of Dennis's way of building a chassis. It means that different wheelbases can be produced fairly simply and cheaply, with no high value components needing resiting in the central section. This has been invaluable in the Dart, for instance, where all the initial demand was for 8.5m buses, now a great rarity as everyone is demanding maximum capacity and is specifying 9.8m versions. However despite this advantage Dennis expects only to offer the Arrow in one wheelbase, 5.05m, giving an overall chassis length of 10.18m. The front overhang is 2.31m, the rear 2.486m, though bodied vehicles are likely to have a longer overhang, giving an overall length of 10.5m; this is the sort of size of double-decker operators are likely to go for, considers Dennis.

Trailing link air suspension is used all round, giving only two air bellows per axle, as opposed to the four on an H-frame often used at the rear of double-deckers. The two-bellow set-up minimises intrusion of suspension components into the saloon and also contributes to the light weight of the vehicle — yet, as noted already, ride quality is still very good. There are four shock absorbers at the rear and two at the front and anti-roll bars are fitted to suit the Arrow's double-deck rôle.

The chassis kerb weight is a competitive 5,610kg, with a gross vehicle weight of 16.8tonnes. Typically bodied vehicles come out at somewhere between 10 and 10.5tonnes, a saving of about a tonne over a comparable 10.5m double-decker. This enables Dennis to offer a 100-passenger capacity (with 84 bus

seats and 16 standees) and, maintains Dennis, should offer a fuel saving of around 1mpg. Moreover the Cummins C-series has already an enviable reputation for fuel efficiency, as the Javelin is proving.

The C-series is also a very compact unit and is mounted at the extreme rear of the chassis and as such creates very little intrusion into the lower saloon. East Lancs has chosen to put side windows right to the rear of the bus, albeit that the rearmost is much shallower than the rest. Northern Counties has gone for the same sort of side-on appearance as a transverse-engined bus, though the rear seats downstairs are further back than the rearmost windows. Northern Counties too has taken advantage of the radiator being in the rear section to design a new front end for the Palatine II body, with no grilles, and has come up with a very neat, stylish front end. East Lancs however has chosen just to blank off the grille, leaving an untidy recess on the front. With its small, American-style twin rectangular headlamps either side of the recess there was the opportunity to do something so much more stylish.

Altogether the Arrow is the embodiment of Dennis's current thinking. Computer-aided design has enabled a lightweight structure to be designed and the compact Cummins engine has enabled the driveline to be so straightforward. These two factors have enabled the weight savings to be made with pay-offs in capacity and fuel consumption. Maintenance should be straightforward, the bus is superb to drive and those passengers who manage not to bump their heads downstairs will no doubt appreciate its good ride quality and low noise levels.

Dennis hopes to sell about 100 in the first year and is pitching prices at a competitive level; a complete vehicle, with Northern Counties Palatine II bodywork with bus seats, is in the region of £110,000, representing a fairly small premium over a 51-seat single-decker. With the Volvo Olympian dominating the double-deck market that 100 vehicles in a year could be quite a challenge to Dennis, especially as operators are cautious to embrace a new concept. But if all Dennis's claims for the Arrow come to pass it could prove a cost-effective and efficient alternative.



Above and top:
Contrasting interiors; the Nottingham coach-seated bus with no rear window and all forward-facing seats and the rear end of the coach-seated London & Country vehicle, showing the recess in the ceiling to give greater headroom over the step.

Left:
The Northern Counties-bodied Arrow demonstrator heads into a roundabout near Lyndhurst in the hands of the author.
STEWART J. BROWN



YOU WRITE

Central planning and tendering in London and thoughts on photography

Central planning?

*From: Peter Shelley, Operations Director,
Solent Blue Line, Southampton*

John Aldridge's item (In London, *Buses* March) on the hastily implemented and ill thought out extension of the 412 in Croydon, and the apparent unwillingness of London Transport to make any change for six months, provided an interesting example of central planning for those who still advocate it.

LT is seen by many throughout the world as the pre-eminent transport organisation, a household name with high customer recognition and impressive ridership levels.

Yet perhaps there is a contrast between the many years of excellent corporate publicity and the ease with which politicians can deal with a single entity versus the need for an organisation to be close enough to the ground to be aware of, and responsive to, the demands of users at a local level. Parking difficulties in the capital and the demand-stimulating effects of the One Day Travelcard may mask the extent to which LT fails to respond to the needs of its users.

The apparent success of LT in the thirties became the model for post-World War 2 transport nationalisation. Let us hope that there is a closer examination of reality before the mistakes of the past are repeated.

Dead mileage

From: Richard Delahoy, Southend on Sea, Essex

Route tendering in London has certainly achieved some impressive economies but has led to a number of inefficiencies. I recently read that Thamesway operated 193, from Romford to Hornchurch, is now operated from Ponders End garage — by my reckoning, a 14 mile dead run each way! With the slow speed of traffic in London, even in the suburbs, I wonder just how long the positioning and crew ferry runs take and how much productive time a driver achieves in a typical shift.

Is this the longest example in the London Transport area or do your readers know of even more extreme cases?

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Price is the key factor

From: Ken Glazier, London

I was somewhat surprised to read in 'Swings and Roundabouts' in the February issue that '... price is now the key factor in tendering for work ...' (in London) as I was not aware that there was ever a time when price was *not* the determining factor.

It is true that, before the current more stringent rules were introduced, it was possible for an operator who had given a high standard of performance to seek to renegotiate an expiring contract instead of it going out to tender but a key part of the renegotiation was always the price, which still had to be competitive. In other words, it had to be reduced and if the operator could not meet the price target, then the work went out to tender. Once work was tendered, however, it was the price that was decisive and if operators tried to include expensive quality-enhancing features in their tenders, then they were almost bound to lose. In fact, there was pressure to remove those which already existed, notably recovery time at terminals, in the scramble to get the price down. This was a constant frustration to responsible operators who wanted to improve quality.

The only circumstances in which quality of performance is supreme is when an operator consistently fails to perform to contract. Some contracts have been terminated for this reason but there have been examples where the incumbent operator, having been disciplined in this way, has gone on to win a fresh mandate for the same work because it had put in the lowest price. I am sure your readers will recall examples of this, without further help from me.

Although a good deal of lip service has been paid to the need for quality when tendering, this has never been a decisive factor in determining who wins. In this respect, however much one may sympathise with the treatment of Metrobus, what happened to them in Orpington was entirely in keeping with the way the system has always worked.

Not a Cavalier

From: Colin Godlement, Bexley, Kent

With reference to the photograph of two AEC Reliances on p37, *Buses* June:

The picture of two Cavaliers
Has the wrong caption, my dears;
With your eyes open wider
An absence of sliders
Should show that they're both **Grenadiers!**

(Harrington's first law states that if you say it's a Cavalier its *bound* to be a Grenadier — and vice versa! We'll watch those sliders in future and try to remember which has them and which hasn't — *Ed*)

The benefit of hindsight — *Buses* February

From: Alan Townsin, Steventon, Hants

Somehow the number of the Corgi Coventry Guy appeared in print this column in the February issue as 228 (EKV 228) instead of 288 (EKV 288) which is what appears on the model, and as I had written. The point I was making, that the actual 288 was of quite different appearance from 331-5/46, which resembled it closely, still remains valid — though the error underlines the case for careful checking of things. (*Point taken!* And apologies for the slip-up — *Ed*)

Personal responsibility

From: Graham Ledger, Berrydale, Northampton

I notice that May's editorial once again expounds the argument about bus preservation that those in museum collections are so much safer than those owned by individuals. Plausible enough in theory.

In reality of course, things are somewhat different. The organisation of museums groups generally relies on volunteers and they will have opinions and exercise choice.

I can throw some light on this reality. I have owned buses for preservation since 1970. On a couple of occasions I have sold them to museum groups, providing a practical test of the view expressed and some illuminating experiences. I will limit the recounting of experience to but one example; however, an apposite one.

One of the vehicles I passed on was entered in almost every rally through the following summer, and there seemed to be no shortage of volunteers to drive it. It was presumably more difficult to find a volunteer to get cold and wet draining the radiator, because the engine block was damaged by frost the next winter. As the bus hasn't been out since, presumably there is a similarly shortage of volunteers to get tired and dirty mending it.

As an individual owner I accept that I have to do unpleasant as well as pleasant jobs, and that no-one else will do them. Museum groups seem to have difficulty in getting necessary, rather than nice, tasks done; sometimes with an unfortunate outcome.

On RBs . . .

From: Peter Haines, Eastwood, Leigh on Sea, Essex

I much enjoyed Steve Sanderson's article in *Buses May* concerning the London RB-class. However, as someone who travelled on them from time to time on route 100, I was very pleased to see them go and I am sure I was not alone.

To sit anywhere other than right at the front was a spine jarring experience on a lightly loaded bus. To be physically propelled from one's seat was a frequent hazard when sitting behind the back axle in the lengthy overhang.

Route 100 is now worked by DW-class Darts. I can not imagine that anyone would swap one for an RB.

. . . and Maltese buses

From: M. D. Barton, Bath

I was amused by the euphoric article on Maltese buses (*Buses April*). I think the bulk of the Maltese population and tourists of above average height would welcome more comfortable public transport.

Robin Hannay could also have submitted photographs of scruffy and unwashed buses (and drivers), balding tyres and missing seats, and of pale yellow buses still in undercoat.

I can confirm the frequent checks by ticket inspectors; they are difficult to detect as they are disguised either as schoolboys or stereotype Mafia, but on each occasion all tickets were in order. The drivers seem well aware of when they are off duty, for then some feel free to smoke in their non-smoking buses. One evening my 67 route bus stopped unexpectedly alongside a 62, blocking all traffic. I was startled when, after a few Maltese exchanges, a metal object clattered through the open doorway. I needn't have worried; it was only a cigarette lighter.

The island is crying out for a fleet of Dennis Darts, which seem much better suited to the narrow streets than anything longer. Dennis has been fighting for this contract for over three years. Perhaps if some of your enthusiast readers took these museums-on-wheels into their care the process of replacement could start.



Great for enthusiasts, but less attractive as public transport; a distinctive Malta Magirus Deutz.

JOHN G. LIDSTONE

Blank looks

From: Chris Weston, Walthamstow

The blank rear panel fad which, predictably, is now spreading to eliminate upper as well as lower rear windows, makes me very angry indeed, and shows that there are still parts of this industry where passengers are still regarded with contempt. How long, I wonder, before rearmost side windows are also blanked out to allow a wraparound rear advert? (*Don't even suggest it!* —Ed)

This ugly and dispiriting development can no longer be justified — if indeed it ever could — because Contravision adverts surely render the panelling over of windows quite unnecessary.

Fox identity

From: Tim Hall, Putney, London

To judge from the features on their new Scania L113s (*Fleet News*, May 1996) it certainly seems as though Midland Fox is adopting a bold and fresh approach.

Of course, Midland Fox was always a more imaginative fleetname than Midland Red East, first bestowed upon that company with the division of the former Midland Red. Nevertheless, the name Midland Fox and its associations have always struck rather a raw nerve for those who, like me, are anti-blood sports. The styling of the current maroon and yellow livery has also seemed to me rather discordant.

Its therefore good to see such an enlightened approach not only to livery, graphics and fleet name but to foxes as well! Let's hope Urban Fox does rule, OK?

Giving the alternative a chance

From: Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby, Lincolnshire

When Transport Minister Steven Norris made critical remarks about fellow users of public transport, I naturally rallied round to their defence. After all, what right had someone in a position of such authority to speak in an arrogant manner about people he was supposed to represent?

Yet confronted with a bus full of screaming infants, illiterate individuals unable to read no smoking signs and loudmouths seemingly acting out the latest Dennis Potter play without the subtleties, one understands why many are put off from abandoning their private vehicles. I mean, the slow pace of some bus services is enough to make anyone resort to using a little Anglo-Saxon! Which is a pity.

For in our town and city centres as well as isolated rural areas, the bus offers a real alternative to the tyranny of car ownership. Companies therefore must 'do their bit' to present an attractive product — I'm not saying they don't already try, rather that a concentrated effort by all those interested in public transport is needed if the future is to be more encouraging than the recent past.

Sutherlands of Peterhead

From: V. J. Attwood, 30 Spring Gardens, Cophorne, West Sussex RH10 3RS

James Sutherland established his transport and bus company in Peterhead in north-east Scotland in 1902. The road haulage aspect of the operation still exists, and vehicles will be seen at all the major airports, as the company principally operates on behalf of the airline industry.

I am endeavouring to piece together some of the early history of the company, especially in relation to the bus operation.

Sutherlands was probably the most northerly company to lend buses to London Transport during World War 2. Does any reader have any information, or even a photograph, of a Sutherlands vehicle in London; and does anyone have any information, or know of a source of information on its bus operation in north-east Scotland? Any information would be appreciated.

Creative photography or waste paper?

From: Andy Meadows, Rayleigh, Essex

Bus photography falls into one main category — the record view. This is usually a front three quarter view, perfectly lit and with a minimum of background and is used to illustrate a particular vehicle type, owner or livery, though certain weather and lighting conditions can enhance the image as can a small amount of background showing interesting and relevant architecture or street furniture. Most photos in *Buses* magazine follow this basic principle. There is also room for the creative image where the photographer uses a degree of artistic licence in creating an image where all or part of the bus is included.

There have been some instances recently that fall short of the above (*Buses April 1996 p16* and *Buses Focus Spring 1996 p32*) — acres of open space and foliage does not constitute creativity and has no meaning. I object to paying for waste paper! These are the worst examples of a worrying trend of photos appearing in *Buses* that feature too much unnecessary background.

Standards of photography in *Buses* magazine are generally good and this must be maintained and improved upon.



Well we thought it was rather nice, but evidently not everyone agrees. Some Derbyshire foliage and a North Western Bristol L5G, as featured in glorious colour in *Buses Focus Bus Preservation 1996*.

JOHN ROBINSON

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SAB 05



This year Heathrow Airport celebrates its 50th anniversary. On 1 January 1946 a British South American Airways Lancastrian — a civilian aircraft converted from a Lancaster bomber — set off for Buenos Aires and the story began, though the airport was not formally opened until 31 May that year. It began on a fairly small scale; there were no terminal facilities and in that first year just 63,000 passengers used it.

Small beginnings maybe, but 50 years on Heathrow is an airport on a massive, world scale. It caters for some 54 million passengers a year, a figure which continues to grow, already that makes it the busiest international airport in the world. It has four terminals, with a proposed fifth which is currently the subject of a planning enquiry. If granted Terminal 5 would allow Heathrow to handle an extra 30 million passengers a year.

In 1946 it handled approximately 2,000 flights a year — just over five per day. Today it handles over 1,000 flights a day on average, with nearly a million tonnes of freight passing through every year. Heathrow is also a significant creator of wealth in the surrounding area, generating 80,000 jobs and contributing £3 billion a year in wages alone to the national economy.

Heathrow, which is owned and operated by BAA Heathrow, a subsidiary company of the former British Airports Authority (BAA), which was privatised in 1987, is widely recognised as one of the most important hubs in air travel worldwide. It is a significant staging point between America and Europe — though other European airports, such as Frankfurt and Amsterdam's Schiphol, would be happy to knock it off its perch. With Terminal 5 BAA Heathrow's position will be secured.

A HUB ON THE GROUND

Heathrow is increasingly an important hub for land-based public transport too. It is in an area where pressure on road space is considerable; it is close to London, as well as on the verge of the stockbroker belt of Berkshire and Surrey, where car use is considered a divine right and public transport struggles.

Yet for all that, Heathrow's public transport record is impressive. Bus and coach services converge at the airport from all points of the compass, and over the years it has increased in importance as a destination for National Express with its Airlink and newly-acquired Flightlink services.

STEPHEN MORRIS has been talking to JOHN LAMB, BAA Heathrow's Transport Development Manager, about the far-reaching and so far very successful Freeflow Heathrow initiative to increase the use of public transport by both passengers and staff at London's Heathrow Airport.

BAA Heathrow 

INVESTING IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In terms of absolute numbers, more passengers use public transport to and from Heathrow than any other airport in the world. Currently it is 34%. With public transport to be built at the heart of the planned fifth terminal, BAA Heathrow expects to increase this to 50%.

At the same time it is aiming to encourage its workforce to use public transport too; while the record on passengers is impressive, the proportion of airport workers using public transport is less so. 12% of workers currently use public transport to get to Heathrow, half of them using bus services, with 82% using cars, and while this is better than average for outer London centres it is a matter of concern to BAA Heathrow.

FREEFLOW HEATHROW

Hence BAA Heathrow's 'Freeflow Heathrow' initiative, a major campaign to encourage staff to leave their cars at home for journeys to and from work. If the campaign is to be successful coordinated action will be necessary across the Heathrow area and in recognition of this, BAA Heathrow has set up the Heathrow Area Transport Forum, chaired by its managing



director Mike Roberts. Made up of local authorities, businesses and key public transport organisations, its aim is to increase the use of public transport and reduce car dependency.

This is easier said than done; Heathrow, despite having very few night flights, is open 24 hours a day and some workers begin and end their day at anti-social hours, when public transport is unlikely to be at its best. However some of the improvement which has already been put in place by BAA Heathrow involves extending the hours in which public transport services — buses in particular — are available.

The Heathrow Area Transport Forum has something of a 'carrot and stick' rôle; it has a Demand Management Group, which looks at the demand for travel in the Heathrow area and investigates issues such as traffic flows, employee car parking and congestion.

Meanwhile four bus groups are examining the potential to improve bus routes in their respective areas, something in which there has already been considerable progress. In addition to looking at improvements in existing services they are studying the potential for new routes, bus priority initiatives and the marketing and promotion of services. There is also a promotions group, which aims to raise awareness of the issues at a national level, while a technology group is considering matters such as bus tracking and real-time information systems. These are already in use in some measure in the Heathrow area, with expectation of more to come.

Other groups are studying cycling and pedestrian access to Heathrow — already cycle priority tunnels to the main central area have been

opened up. There is also a rail group. Heathrow has a rail connection via London Underground's Piccadilly Line, while the new Heathrow Express link is well under way and is due to open in 1998, giving a 16min journey into Paddington four times an hour from 05.00 until 23.30. This and other longer-term rail developments — some involving coach transfers — will naturally help Freeflow Heathrow to meet its objectives. Despite expectation of six million passengers a year using the Heathrow Express, rail travel is, and will remain, only a part of the equation. Bus and coach services are vital to achieving the overall aims. Some 85% of passengers arriving at Heathrow by surface modes are resident in London and the south-east, so while rail services are important on certain corridors, local bus and coach services are an essential part of Heathrow's public transport provision.

Freeflow Heathrow was launched in April 1995 and is in essence a travel awareness campaign, though BAA Heathrow has backed this up with positive improvements to services to make them more attractive to users and, more significantly, potential users. There are several travel awareness campaigns across the country, usually on a countywide basis. However 'Freeflow Heathrow' is the single largest and claims to be the most focused; it has achieved 90% awareness amongst Heathrow's 54,000 workers.

THE '285 EFFECT'

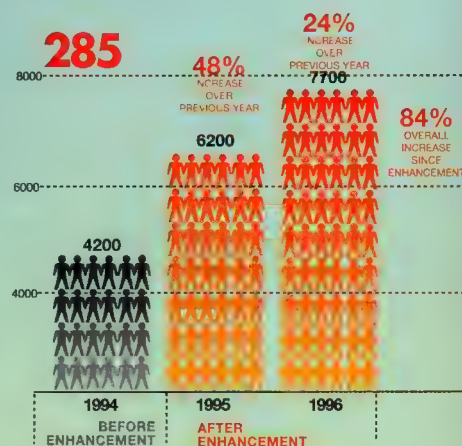
Several local services into Heathrow have already received the 'Freeflow Heathrow treatment', and more are to follow. Three routes, or groups of routes, out to different areas in the locality have received specific branding, along with improved frequencies and general improvements to fit in better with the pattern of usage that Heathrow generates. That includes more early-morning and late-evening journeys as well as enhancements at weekends.

The flagship of the campaign is London Transport route 285 to Kingston via Hatton Cross — an important bus/Underground interchange with the Piccadilly Line on the southern perimeter of the airport — Feltham, Hampton Hill and Teddington. Since the split-up of London Buses this has been worked by London United, though London Buslines has won the tender for the next contract on the service and takes over in June.

Following the opening of the Piccadilly line into Heathrow Central at the end of 1977 the 285 was cut back to a 20min service. However

as part of the 'Freeflow Heathrow' campaign the service, which serves an area inhabited by over 2,500 airport workers, was increased again to every 10min, and the period of operation was extended to run from around 05.00 to around 23.00 seven days a week. The route was recently diverted to serve the Compass Centre, British Airways' spectacular new operations centre on the northside of the airport.

At the same time buses, both Metrobuses and Dennis Darts, were given a branded livery created, like several elements of Freeflow Heathrow's external image, by Ray Stenning of Best Impressions. The 285 branding was later to form the basis of London United's own livery. Leaflets were produced and distributed to promote the service.



Passengers boarding in the Heathrow area, per week

The results were dramatic; passenger numbers on the enhanced section of route have increased by 84% since the improvements were introduced at the end of October 1994, helping to generate 400,000 extra passengers along the entire route. This increase means that BAA Heathrow and British Airways can now transfer their funding to upgrade and support alternative services.

SLOUGH IMPROVEMENT

On the west side of Heathrow there are a significant number of airport workers who come in from the Slough direction so it was decided to enhance the 74/75 to Slough.

The 74 and 75 are operated by Beeline and in some respects created more of a challenge than the 285. The car journey from the Slough direction to Heathrow is easier than it is from



the Kingston direction. It is also outside the London Transport area, so fares are higher and willingness to use public transport is generally lower in the shire counties than in the London area. The base frequency was also much lower, but increased to give a regular half-hourly service from Slough. Again provision of services was extended, with the first bus leaving Slough at 05.18 six days a week and 05.44 on Sundays and last buses from Heathrow — actually on route 190, which was incorporated into publicity — at 22.48. Again special liveries were used, with a large amount of green added to the livery of the yellow Dennis Darts.

Ridership growth was not quite in the same league as the 285, but was still highly

MOVING ON . . .

Following the success of these first initiatives similar route enhancement was introduced on further routes from the spring of 1995. CentreWest's route 105 to Southall and Greenford was increased from a 20min frequency to every 12-15min, replacing big buses with Mercedes-Benz 811Ds. This was branded the Heathrow Challenger.

After a year operation passed to London & Country under the tendering process, with easy-access Plaxton bodied Dennis Dart SLFs, and Heathrow is looking to increase the frequency to every 10min. Combined with the 285 this will create a 5min frequency between Heathrow Central and the Compass Centre.

Indeed an aspect of Freeflow Heathrow is to encourage use of buses for such journeys undertaken during the working day by on-duty staff.

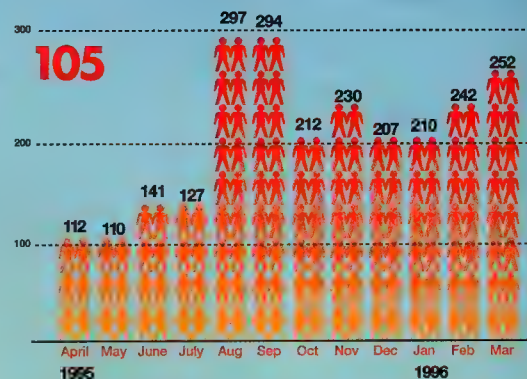
The corridor to Staines and beyond, to the south-west of the airport, also came into the Freeflow Heathrow scope in June 1995, when new London & Country Dennis Darts came in a special livery for an extended route 441.

Historically the 441 has provided a corridor between Staines and Windsor via Egham, but now the Staines-Windsor section is 41, with hourly 441 journeys running from Englefield Green to Heathrow via Egham and Staines. These combine with the 436, which continues right to Guildford, to create a half-hourly service to Staines from 05.25 with last journeys from the airport at nearly midnight seven nights per week. They also give Egham and Englefield Green their first direct link with Heathrow.

Although the 436 is very much part of this combined service, only the 441 habitually uses liveried Darts. The 436 still sees a motley collection of Addlestone garage's finest Leyland Nationals and National Greenways. The routes are underwritten by BAA Heathrow and are reviewed quarterly; already 40% revenue generation has been recorded.

There is more to come; BAA Heathrow is turning its attention to London United services 555 and 556. These services previously ran to Walton-on-Thames every half hour but on June 28 were enhanced, partly by extending the hourly Chertsey-Sunbury service 557 to Heathrow and partly by adding a new journey altogether to create a 15min service between Heathrow, Stanwell, Ashford, Sunbury and Shepperton.

The service is to be fitted with Bustracker to give real-time information and over £600,000 is to be invested over the next two years. Since London United took over this Surrey County Council contract in 1993 passenger numbers have grown steadily, resulting in enhanced early-morning, late-evening and Sunday services. The upgraded service is operated by suitably-branded Dennis Darts.



Average number of extra passengers boarding at Heathrow, per day compared to the same period the previous year

Meanwhile London United intends to improve the 140 to Harrow, the only service into Heathrow to have been involved in Harrow's Smartcard trials, by replacing its ageing Metrobuses with 1990 Olympians currently used on London United's 237 service.

HELPING THE BUSES

In addition to investment in enhanced services BAA Heathrow has taken other positive steps to improve services. One is to help operators by removing departure charges from the bus station on all local services. The station itself has benefited from computerised passenger information screens giving departure times and details for the next services from each stand. Heathrow Central bus station and terminal forecourts have over 1,000 departures a day serving over 500 destinations. It is now recognised as an important bus and coach interchange in its own right, quite apart from its function of bringing airline passengers and airport workers into Heathrow. It has steadily improved over the years, and is now undergoing major redevelopment.

Indeed such is the commitment to public transport that plans for the proposed Terminal 5 involve bus, rail and Underground stations being the central feature of the terminal building instead of an adjunct to it.

Terminal 4 also boasts a large bus and coach station; many services into Heathrow serve Terminal 4 as well as the main central area, where the bus station is strategically located at a point in the middle of Terminals 1, 2 and 3. However most passengers transferring between Terminal 4 and the central terminal area do so either by Underground (easy for passengers from Terminal 4, less so for those going to Terminal 4 as it has a one-way loop round the airport) or by dedicated transfer buses, mainly low-floor Berkhof-bodied Dennis Lance SLFs.

One excellent bus priority denied to bus operators in recent years is the cargo tunnel. At one time services coming in from the south of the airport could cut through the tunnel, saving several minutes of touring the perimeter road. The problem is that the tunnel actually goes airside, with security implications. However Heathrow's public transport team is working hard to get it reopened and if successful will extend various services, including the 140, from the central bus station through to British Airways' new World Cargo centre on the south side of the airport.

The other main coach connections are



respectable, achieving some 20-25% growth in the first year. This was also aided by special fares deals, which were extended over a wide area surrounding Heathrow initially on a short-term basis; half-price season tickets were made available to airport workers, on production of a Heathrow security pass.

A £54 season ticket giving unlimited travel to Heathrow from anywhere in the Slough borough for a month was available for only £27, with similar deals on other corridors, and season tickets at flat rates on a zonal basis. A £3 day return was also introduced from Slough or Langley to Heathrow and a journey time of 29min was advertised.



SEASON TICKETS FOR STAFF

or annual prices



RAIL LINKS AND INTER-AIRPORT

Although Heathrow does not yet have a direct link with the British Rail network — soon to be remedied by Heathrow Express — it has for many years had good, dedicated coach links from it. At present there are three of these. One connects with the Paddington main line at Reading, operated by Beeline using smartly-liveried Berkhof-bodied Scania K113s.

Another connects with the Waterloo line at Woking, provided by Speedlink Airport Services using Van Hool-bodied Scania K113s. New passenger lounges have been provided at both Reading and Woking, and BAA has invested £25,000 in each.

These services are included in the BR timetable and through booking is available. Both run half-hourly seven days a week from around 06.00 until about 23.00.

A new Railair link service was put in front 2 June; this joins the airport to the Chiltern Lines, from points such as Bicester, Banbury, Leamington, Solihull and Birmingham, at Gerrards Cross. Vehicles are Autobus Classique-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814Ds supplied by Speedlink in a livery designed by Ray Stenning, responsible for many of the bus and coach liveries associated with Heathrow.

Although not dedicated rail links, and with no through tickets available, local services 285 and 140 are also

promoted as having a rail link element; the 285 serves Feltham station on South West Trains, while the 140 currently gives an additional connection into the Paddington line at Hayes & Harlington. Meanwhile there has for many years been a connection with the West Coast Main Line at Watford Junction, provided originally by Green Line services 727 and 724.

However the main service to Watford Junction is now provided by Jetlink 747, which was originally a non-stop Heathrow-Gatwick Green Line link before the days of the M25 and was re-routed via the motorway progressively as it opened. At its full extent Jetlink now goes all the way from Norwich to Brighton, though the section between Stevenage and Gatwick provides an hourly service not only to Watford Junction but also to the East Coast Main Line at Stevenage. Heathrow bus station to Watford Junction takes 25min (M25 permitting!) which is half the time taken by the 724. The 747 is strengthened between Heathrow and Gatwick to every 30min, alternate journeys continuing to Brighton. The through Norwich-Brighton service runs round the clock. BAA Heathrow was instrumental in getting the service extended to Norwich — its 01.45 departure arrives at Heathrow at 04.55, in time to check in for the earliest airline departures. Building on this success the four hourly Norwich service has been increased to two-hourly.

Nowadays Jetlink is no longer part of the Green Line network but is run by Speedlink Airport Services, which began life to provide the high-class Heathrow-Gatwick Speedlink which replaced the helicopter service between the two airports prior to the opening of the M25. This it still does,



at a premium fare, with executive-style coaches, and many incoming passengers use Speedlink as a through-ticketed transfer between flights at the two airports.

Speedlink Airport Services indeed has expanded rapidly and provides many of Heathrow's internal bus services under contract to BAA Heathrow.





FROM FURTHER AFIELD

With the lack of direct rail access from most parts of the country express coaches are particularly important to Heathrow. As part of the Freeflow Heathrow campaign £50,000 has been invested in marketing the National Express Airlink network, with coaches in their dedicated blue, white and silver livery. These provide direct access to both Heathrow and Gatwick on four routes – Bristol, South Wales (Swansea, Cardiff, Newport etc), Yorkshire (Bridford, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley and Sheffield), the North East (Newcastle, Sunderland, Darlington, also stopping at Nottingham and Leicester). The Yorkshire service also stops at the National Express-owned East Midlands airport.

There are numerous other non-branded National Express services which also call at Heathrow, most of those heading out to the west of London along the M3 or M4 call in, while service 325 from Lancashire and Manchester really qualifies as an



Airlink service although it does not carry the branding. This takes in Manchester, Birmingham and Luton airports on its way to Heathrow and Gatwick. There is also a daily coach from Glasgow.

Recently National Express also took over the Flightlink service from Birmingham operator Flights, which continues to supply vehicles under contract to National Express. This provides services primarily from the West Midlands and allows passengers to book through on their airline ticket.

Cambridge Coach Services to Cambridge, via Stansted and Luton airports, recently extended to Ipswich, while Oxford Bus Company and Thames Transit vie with each other to Oxford as the X70 and Heathrow Tube respectively, both providing departures round the clock.

With both operators battling for supremacy in Oxford, Thames Transit overlaid its 390 stopping service from Oxford to Heathrow with the Heathrow Tube last October, stepping it up to hourly and adding a two-hourly night service, with an increase to half-hourly during the day from February this year. The 390 now runs hourly, with Mercedes minibuses rather

doubt and the new station could be on another site. These new stations will be named Heathrow North and Heathrow South respectively and will be linked by a new high-quality coach service. These are planned to be in operation within the next two to three years.

Once Heathrow Express opens there are plans to expand the scope of rail operation. Investment of around £10 million could provide a link from the Paddington line near Old Oak Common to Willesden Junction. Under the open access provisions of the 1993 Railways Act, Richard Branson has plans to run a rail link to the City via Willesden Junction and the North London Line into Moorgate.

LOCAL COACHES

Green Line-style local coach operations are not so numerous as they once were, but still play a valuable rôle in serving Heathrow from a wide range of destinations a little beyond the scope of most local routes.

In addition to the Jetlink services which have taken over some of the medium distance links, taking advantage of the faster journey times offered by the M25, there are still two Green Line-type orbital routes. The 724 has provided a corridor around the northern Home Counties for just 30 years, having begun on 10 July 1966 between Romford and High Wycombe.

Nowadays the basic trunk of the route, via Uxbridge, Watford, St Albans, Hertford

remains, though its extremities are now Heathrow to the west and Harlow to the east. It provides some useful links, though is not particularly timed to serve all airport needs, working hourly across the main part of the day.

An extension through to Stansted has recently been withdrawn in favour of faster links from Heathrow, though there is still a connecting service run by County Bus from Harlow to Stansted, with through booking available, to provide for local links to Stansted.

The other similar service remaining at Heathrow is the 726, which is effectively a remnant of the first of Green Line's orbital routes, the 725, which began as a service between Gravesend and Windsor in 1953. Today's 726 is scarcely recognisable as a Green Line, as it is operated by white and red coach-seated Ikarus-bodied DAF SB220s of London

Coaches. Nowadays it is truncated slightly at its eastern extremity, running only as far as Dartford, while again its western terminus is Heathrow. It runs in a semi-circle round the southern side of London, providing a useful hourly semi-fast service to Heathrow from places such as Kingston, Sutton, Croydon and Bromley, across a rather wider span of the day than the 724.

The other orbital Green Line that used to serve Heathrow was the 727, which prior to the M25 provided a limited-stop service to Gatwick and Crawley. Today the much faster Jetlink 747 — introduced as a non-stop alternative to the 727 — and Speedlink are so much more attractive that the 727 no longer comes into Heathrow but simply links Kingston and Crawley via Gatwick.

LINKS TO LONDON

Green Line once provided links between Heathrow and Central London, but these days the principal link is by London United's Airbus service. This has its origins in the services provided historically by BEA and BOAC, later to become British Airways, between central London and the airport. No longer does the airline have its check-in facility in central London (though it will offer one at Paddington when Heathrow Express starts in 1998) and Airbus is available to all travellers to the airport, whether airline passengers or not.

It is unusual in that it runs entirely within the London Transport area and is provided by a former London Buses company, London United, but it is a fully commercial operation and does not form part of the LT network. Thus Travelcard holders would be more likely to come to Heathrow via the Piccadilly Line on which their cards would be valid.

The Airbus is now a network of three routes; A1 connects all Heathrow's terminals with Victoria, with a scheduled journey time of around an hour (give or take a bit for peak hours) and runs every 20min, with a first departure from Heathrow at 05.40 and a last departure just before 20.00. A2 provides a very similar level of service, but continues to 21.30 (half-hourly in the evenings) with a direct service to Paddington, Marble Arch, and Euston, terminating at Russell Square — convenient for a number of hotels. The third service, Airbus Direct, was introduced only last July; it too serves Russell Square and calls by request at a number of hotels in Central London, giving the convenience of a taxi at a fraction of the cost; fares are the same as the A1 and A2 at £6 single (£10 return).



than the Volvo coaches used on the Tube.

RAIL LINKS IN THE FUTURE

The Heathrow Express may look as if it could spell the end of Rail Link service, but this is not the case. The Reading service is particularly useful for passengers from the West Country and South Wales and even after Heathrow Express comes into operation it will avoid the necessity to travel into Paddington and back out again — though plans for the future would include a spur off the Heathrow Express to Terminal 5 and then westwards from Heathrow.

There are plans to expand the use of other rail routes with Rail Link services. These include plans for new stations, one on the Paddington main line at Stockley Park, the high-tech industrial park near Uxbridge, the other at Feltham, on South West Trains' service from Waterloo to Staines, Windsor and Reading. It was intended for the latter to be at Bedfont Lakes, another new high-tech industrial development just off the south-west corner of the airport, but this is currently in



Services A1 and A2 have recently been upgraded. These services are run by double-deckers, on the basis that these appeal to tourists — Americans especially — though their capacity is useful between 07.00 and 11.00, when most inter-continental flights arrive at Heathrow, particularly in the summer. That may suggest that many of its passengers are tourists, but according to London United 25% of Airbus passengers are business travellers.

The current generation Airbuses are only 51-seaters, and the lower deck is almost entirely luggage accommodation, giving cavernous



capacity. They have the great advantage that passengers walk on and off with their luggage — there is no need for the driver to keep loading and unloading it with attendant delays both to passengers and other road users in Central London. Latterly coach-seated Metrobuses were used but these have been replaced by 19 long-wheelbase Alexander Royale-bodied Volvo Olympians. They are similar to some of the high-specification buses which have entered service in Hong Kong over the last few years, and are the first British double-deck buses with air conditioning. Like the Metrobuses, which have been cascaded on to other London United routes — indeed they can often be seen at Heathrow on the 140 — they have wheelchair lifts at the entrance.

The Airbus Direct service is run by Carlyle-bodied Dennis Darts which have been cascaded from other London United services, refurbished and fitted with 21 coach seats and air conditioning. It serves up to 48 hotels — though each individual journey serves only four as a maximum — and hotel staff are able to sell tickets for it and receive a commission. Together A1, A2 and Airbus Direct will give between 12 and 15 buses per hour to Central London this summer.



HEATHROW FAST AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The aim of the bus support element of the 'Freeflow Heathrow' initiative is to provide pump-priming finance for services to give them the opportunity to develop to the point where they can continue at their new enhanced level without support from BAA Heathrow. Resources can then be targetted on other areas of the local bus network.

Due to start on 31 August a new service, A10, to be known as Heathrow Fast, is a joint venture between BAA Heathrow, the London Borough of Hillingdon and Stockley Park Consortium Ltd. Stockley Park is a high-tech business park on the outskirts of Uxbridge, including sites for British Telecom and BP. The Consortium will be contributing £80,000 a year towards getting the new service off the ground. BAA Heathrow for its part is putting in £100,000 a year and Hillingdon is paying £40,000 a year towards the service. It will provide a fast service from Uxbridge and Stockley Park to Heathrow every 15min.

It is intended that the A10 will be something of a showpiece of the best in bus transport. It will have Countdown real-time information at stops and London Transport has contracted the A10 to CentreWest. BAA Heathrow has ensured that it will have easy-access Dennis Darts with high-quality seating. They will also incorporate a new type of folding ramp at the entrance to improve accessibility while avoiding some of the technical problems with the understep ramps used so far on London Transport low-floor buses. An advertising campaign will be provided and BAA Heathrow regards the service as a speculative venture. Altogether £1 million is being invested in the route over two years, though it is expected to generate £200,000 a year, representing 40% of the costs of operating the service. However BAA Heathrow is confident that growth over and above traditional forecasts will allow this route to operate profitably after two years.

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

Promotion of public transport has been a key part of 'Freeflow Heathrow'. The first element was the targetting of Heathrow's 54,000 staff with the message 'there's a better way to work'.

Advertisements were placed on staff buses and local service buses, displays placed on staff notice boards and on electronic mail systems, as well as in staff magazines and local newspapers. In addition to the promotion of public transport a computerised car sharing scheme was introduced by BAA Heathrow and by British Airways.

Phase 1 also saw the introduction of a Heathrow Staff Traveline, although this has now been replaced and upgraded by a new Heathrow Traveline serving the needs of both staff and airline passengers operated by Speedlink Airport Services, though BAA Heathrow contributed half the cost of the capital equipment for this computerised system.

An excellent pocket timetable has been produced in conjunction with London United, showing times of all local bus, coach and rail services to the airport, the last including South West Trains and Thames Trains services to Feltham and Hayes & Harlington.

The Heathrow Local Travel Guide is the first comprehensive guide to public transport for the airport.

The services which have so far been given special treatment under Freeflow Heathrow (285, 74/75 and 436/441) have all had special timetable leaflets produced for them. Best Impressions were also commissioned to produce a map showing the main transport connections at Heathrow. Another map shows long-distance coach and rail connections.

The other element in the promotion of services has been the special season ticket rates for Heathrow staff, discussed earlier, which have been very widely promoted in the local media and offer an attractively-priced alternative to private transport.

THE FUTURE'S RIDING ON IT

Heathrow's publicity refers to 'Investing in Public Transport — the future's riding on it'. It is a fascinating example of a private-sector business investing in public transport as a way to improve its efficiency by 'easing the squeeze' and reducing the environmental impact of traffic across West London.

Currently there is much talk of partnerships between local authorities and private-sector operators to improve the quality of public transport. Although BAA Heathrow is not a local authority it is nonetheless providing an excellent model of how such partnerships could work. First signs are that it is having an effect in moving the modal split more in favour of public transport. Inevitably there is still much more to do, but BAA Heathrow intends this initiative to be long-term — until such time as the use of public transport becomes habitual again and no such involvement is necessary. Public transport will be an integral part of the planned fifth terminal.

Nationwide the change in modal split is going to take a lot of hard work and investment but needs to be achieved. Heathrow is proving that it can be done.



PUBLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH BUSES — JULY 1996



BAA Heathrow

Investing in Public Transport
the future's riding on it

WET GATESHEAD

The Go Ahead Northern Bus Enthusiasts Association's annual event at Gateshead aims to be the Showbus of the north-east; weatherwise it certainly achieved it this year!

STEPHEN MORRIS donned his Showbus wet gear and braved the elements

Sunday 12 May, one gathers, was generally rather a better day for weather in England than most days of spring 1996. Except, that is, in Gateshead, where it contrived to pour down most of the day. Which was a shame, as there was a fine gathering of buses and coaches in the MetroCentre car park for the seventh Go Ahead Northern Bus Enthusiasts Association's MetroCentre Rally & Bristol Commercial Vehicle Register Northern Area Gathering. The MetroCentre coach park in the rain, it has to be said, is not one of the most inspiring of locations, but whatever else the event has in the way of distinction, there can be few to touch it for the length of its name!

As a rally, in fact, it has a lot to commend it; in particular, if you come from, or are in enforced exile in, the south of England you will see buses there you won't see at many other events, with a fair number making the journey south from Scotland where they don't have very many rallies of their own. It is one of those events which enjoys a friendly, informal atmosphere and it has become very much an unofficial gathering for the Go Ahead Group itself, which was represented not only by every garage from its empire in the north-east (including subsidiaries such as OK) but also by Brighton & Hove, whence an intrepid crew had driven for 13 hours at a stately 38mph in the

company's magnificent Bristol KSW6G, being rewarded for their pains with armfuls of trophies.

Another south of England member of the group, City of Oxford Motor Services, was also represented by the very welcome appearance of a 1956 Weymann-bodied AEC Regent V, with exposed radiator and glorious in its operator's traditional livery; this fine bus is looked after on the company's behalf by the Oxford Bus Museum and has not been seen on the road for 15 years.

There was also the opportunity to see three Northern General Routemasters together; like the Oxford Bus Museum GANBEA also looks after a Go Ahead Group vehicle, Routemaster 2099, which is preserved in the later livery with more cream, though the author admits to a preference for the Northern Routemaster Group's 2105, beautifully restored in the earlier livery, recalling memorable journeys on them between Durham and Newcastle some 30 years ago. The third, 2122, came from London sightseeing operator The Big Bus Company, making a return to the north-east after an absence of some 15 years.

It was a shame the weather took the edge off things; there was a good gathering of vehicles from various corners of the country creating a fascinating mix.



A Northern Routemaster as nature intended it; the Northern Routemaster Group's 2105.



Making its debut was this ex-Burnley & Pendle Pennine-bodied Bristol RESL6L.



The City of Oxford AEC Regent V which has not been seen on the road for some time.



Magnificently restored from near-derelict berry buses are these two Edinburgh vehicles, now owned by the Edinburgh Transport Group, an Alexander-bodied Leyland PD3, a worthy winner of its class, and an Atlantean which was a close runner-up.

CLASSIC



100 YEARS OF LEYLAND

1996 sees the centenary of Britain's most famous commercial vehicle builder, Leyland. By way of celebration, the publisher of Buses is producing this high quality, lavishly illustrated magazine looking at Leyland's truck-building activities.

Written by Stewart J. Brown,
one time Leyland employee and

former editor of *Trucking International*, this magazine takes an overview of 100 years of Leyland truck manufacture, covering topics such as:-

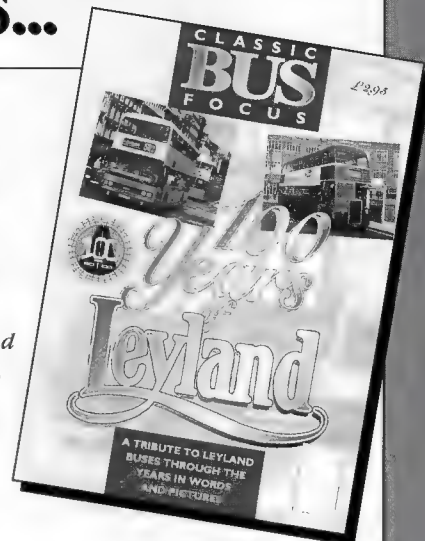
- ▶ the rise of the company at the beginning of this century
- ▶ the company's success in World War 1
- ▶ the company as a quality heavyweight manufacturer
- ▶ the lightweight Cub range
- ▶ the takeover of other manufacturers to become Britain's No 1 builder of heavy trucks
- ▶ Leyland's takeover by DAF in the 1980s and its re-emergence as a British-owned manufacturer in the 1990s



This special one-off publication looks at Leyland buses over the past century, with articles by leading writers and supplemented with a superb selection of photographs.

Topics include:-

- ▶ Alan Townsin on Leyland's technical advances
- ▶ Mike Sutcliffe on the joys of older Leylands
- ▶ The Leyland Journal by John Aldridge
- ▶ Leylands - home and away
- ▶ Leylands that might have been
- ▶ Leyland Blunderbuses by Alan Millar
- ▶ Driving Leylands - photo-features on Leyland buses in Lancashire and overseas
- ▶ Ken Blacker on London Leylands



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VRA01

LEYLAND 100

It was billed as 'a once in a lifetime celebration'. Leyland 100, held on the streets of Leyland on the 2 June, was certainly a unique occasion as trucks and buses from all over the UK returned to the town that had given them their name to celebrate 100 years of Leyland automotive engineering. ANDY IZATT joined the crowds that turned out to mark the event.

There was almost a carnival atmosphere in Hough Lane in Leyland which had been closed to normal traffic for the day. Visitors mingled with townsfolk as they strolled up and down surveying the superb collection of vehicles that had assembled to mark the 100th birthday of Leyland. Many of the people present had worked for Leyland and must have felt pride for a company that had made their town a respected name around the world.

Lions and Tigers

Among the many commercials was a super selection of Leyland buses and coaches. Pride of place must go to Mike Sutcliffe's 1908 Leyland X2 which made its debut at this year's HCVS London to Brighton run but it was up against some pretty stiff opposition. YT 3738, a 1927 Leyland Lioness which worked for Jersey Motor Transport for many years was on display in Hough Lane as was Stagecoach Ribble's Lion PLSC1 registered CK 3825 from the same year, the bus now being in the care of the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport. Next to it was TF 818, a later, LT1, Lion dating from 1930 in the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle collection, ex-Lancashire United Transport. Jasper Pettie's 1928 Glasgow TD1 Titan made a fine sight as did ATF 477 the three-axle Fowler-bodied Leyland Tiger TS7T new in 1937 which spent its working life in the Leyland area running for Singletons. Harrold Peers' Ribble TD5 with Alexander bodywork was impressive and made an interesting contrast to the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Group's Leyland TS7, RN 7588, parked in King Street, but a personal favourite was BTB 928, Blackpool Transport's Lytham St Annes Lion LT7C.

The war years were represented by DSG 169, believed to be the only TD5 built at this time although such were the confines of Hough Lane it was not possible to appreciate this outstanding bus in its true glory. The same could not be said for Bill Montgomery's stunning NIRTB Leyland Tiger PS1 from 1948 which looked completely at home in front of the terraced houses of a Leyland side street. It was well complemented by HG 9651, another PS1 new to Burnley, Colne & Nelson.

Fifties engineering

For many, Leyland was at its greatest in the 1950s and there was no shortage of vehicles on display recalling the products of this time. Amongst the double-deckers were NEH 453 and NEH 466, two Potteries Motor Traction's Leyland Titan OPD2/1s which, on their export chassis, also served as a reminder of Leyland's significant successes in world markets. PD2s and PD3s were on offer, one of the most appropriate being 528 CTF, a PD2/40 which was new to J. Fishwick & Sons and which is now undergoing extensive renovation. It was also good to see examples of Southdown's 'Queen Mary' PD3/4s and Ribble's equivalent PD3/5s together, one of the latter remaining with Stagecoach Ribble as a driver training bus at Preston.

The underfloor engine era was represented by MMN 302, a rare Isle of Man Leyland Olympic and by Trent's Tiger Cub and a similar Delaine's Yeates-bodied coach dating from 1962 and 1958 respectively. Ingleby's Luxury Coaches of York entered TRN 731, a Leopard PSU3/3R of 1963 which carries a PSV certificate while Mark Hayes of Leyland entered the very last Tiger Cub built, VTD 441H which like ATF 477 has rare Fowler bodywork.

Rear engines

Leyland's famous rear-engined Atlantean was exemplified by early examples from the Devon General, Liverpool and Wallasey (the first production example) fleets as well as Marshall-bodied single-decker GEX 740F from Great Yarmouth and B926 KWM still in service with MTL and believed to be the last Atlantean to be registered in this country. The furthest travelled though was UNB 629, a Manchester bus which had been exported for further service in Australia. A Titan from a different generation was represented by Aintree Coaches' TMX 535R, a B15 prototype originally registered BCK 706R while PMT supplied a Leyland Olympian as did Preston whose vehicle had been used as a demonstrator by Leyland.

The Leyland National was not forgotten. The Greater Manchester Transport Society turned out TXJ 507K, while the 1980s Tiger was represented by Delaine's with E100 AFW carrying the last of Duple's Dominant bus



Not quite all the Leylands at Leyland 100 had been built at the Farington works. Workington-built Leyland National Suburban Express RRM 148M is a welcome addition to the ranks of preserved buses. ANDY IZATT

bodies, Go-Ahead Northern with its OK rear-engined RETL11 and Ulsterbus with YXI 5500. This bus dating from 1993 was the last Tiger built being the last of a batch of over 200 Volvo-engined chassis. As with the Bristol RE Ulsterbus knew a good bus when it saw one and liked to stick with it.

Lancaster House

Speaking of rarities like the OK Tiger, other notables were the Mersey & Calder Bus Preservation Group's Douglas Corporation Comet CPO1, RRM 148M the Leyland National Suburban Express demonstrator and the remarkable Northern Tynesider based on a Leyland PD3. Fishwick's unique pair of Leyland Atlantean AN69s made regular appearances on the car park shuttle service and it seemed appropriate to take advantage of GRN 895W for a trip to car park 'A' adjacent to Lancaster House, once the power centre for the Leyland empire. It is still used as offices but being a Sunday there was not a soul in sight in contrast to the bustle in Hough Lane, the building standing as a quiet memorial to a once great company.

With the added bonus of the British Commercial Vehicle Museum on offer as well, Leyland 100 brought together a very special collection of vehicles which provided a fitting tribute to the Leyland name, the streets of the town providing exactly the right backdrop to the event. But more than just being another rally this was a commemoration of the life's work of a town and its people.



Lancaster House, provides a backdrop to LNY 536D, a Massey-bodied Titan PD2/37 in the livery of Caerphilly District Council on the car park shuttle service. ANDY IZATT



Blackpool Transport's superb Lytham St Annes Lion LT7C with Leyland bodywork. BTB 928 was bought by Fylde Transport in 1988 and restored by them.
ANDY IZATT



The remarkable 1937 Fowler-bodied Leyland Tiger TS7T six-wheeler, ATF 477 that spent its working life with Singleton's, Leyland.
ANDY IZATT



The Jersey Motor Transport Leyland Lioness, YT 3738 which was new to King George V in Hough Lane.
ANDY IZATT



Lions meet. Lancashire United TF 818 of the LVVS and Stagecoach Ribble's CK 3825 now in the care of the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport.
ANDY IZATT



Lined up in the King Street car park are RN 7588 a 1935 Ribble Tiger TS7, MMN 302 the Isle of Man Olympic and WSK 509 (OMS 253) an Alexander's Tiger Cub of 1960.
ANDY IZATT

One of the stars of Leyland 100 was Mike Sutcliffe's latest restoration, a 1908 Leyland X2 of London Central. Like most of Mike's amazing restorations it was rebuilt from a derelict body and chassis, which were discovered, separated from each other, in a field in Warwickshire. It is the oldest surviving British motorbus and was completed earlier this year. The Leyland 100 event provided the impetus to get it finished for this year, though Mike was determined it should appear at the London-Brighton rally on 5 May, where

JOHN ALDRIDGE photographed it.

The full story of this remarkable restoration appeared in *Buses Focus* — *Bus Preservation*, published by Ian Allan in April, which is still available price £2.95. Also available are *Classic Truck Focus* and *Classic Bus Focus*, available at £2.95 each, both on the subject of 100 years of Leyland. The *Classic Bus* magazine includes an article by Mike Sutcliffe on early Leylands.



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Derek Hunt, an Isle of Wight fruit and vegetable merchant, regularly uses Red Funnel's ferries, crossing the Solent with the classic Commer lorry he uses for the business. Thus Red Funnel gave him a free return trip to take his 1950 Seaview Services all-Leyland PD2 to the HCVS London-Brighton rally.

West Midlands seeks buses

West Midlands Travel is holding a Vintage Bus Running Day on Sunday **28 July**, when its 1954 Daimler CVG6, 3225, will be operating route 1 from Acocks Green to the city centre. Chris Rolfe, the company's divisional solicitor, would like to hear from operators with preserved or interesting psv-licensed vehicles who would be interested in taking part. Profits from the day are donated to a local charity, and an open day is held at Acocks Green garage at the same time. Details from Chris Rolfe on 0121 359 2616.

Right and far right:

The Stratford Blue Leyland PS2 double-decker as newly restored in 1987 and as photographed recently when being recovered to Wythall; it seems another two years' restoration work is now required.

A. W. BAXTER/S. G. RICHARDS

REDD found

The British Bus Preservation Group reports that a 1933 Midland Red SOS REDD has been found in a wood in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. The bus, HA 8047, is thought to have been there since 1951 and is in remarkably complete order. It is mechanically intact and the trees have protected some of the bodywork from corrosion, although one side is corroded and a tree has grown through the cab area. The vehicle is now in the care of Nick Taylor and a team at the Oxford Bus Museum and it is hoped to have it restored by 2000.

BBPG — another conference

Following its conference on the future of bus preservation at Cardington, Bedfordshire, in March the British Bus Preservation Group is to hold another similar event on **17 November**. Details from BBPG at 10 Hillfield, Alconbury, nr Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 5WA.

Eastern Counties commemoration

An Eastern Counties 65th Anniversary Running Day takes place in Cambridge on 14 July. Further to the report under Cambus in 'Fleet News', *Buses* May, only Bristol LS4G/ECW B41F MAH 744, MW5G/ECW B45F 3014 AH, RELH6G/ECW C47F SVF 896G and K5G/ECW H56R HPW 133 have 'promised to attend'. One vehicle is due from the Eastern Transport Collection (either Bristol LL5G/ECW KNG 718 or RESL6G/ECW KVF 658E). A vehicle from Kings Lynn depot is also expected. Neither of the two Bristol FLFs will be attending, as both have been placed in store following the Stagecoach takeover.

The event has no connection with Cambus; for further information, send an SAE to Mr K. Worland, 25 Alpha Terrace, Trumpington, Cambridge CB2 2HS.

Double-deckers in France

Danny B. Chabaud from Romagne, France, would like to reassure readers about the destiny of former Southend Leyland PD3/6/Massey CUN 435C, which is now his ownership in south-west France. It was repainted in original Southend livery by Carl Ireland.

It has joined MCS 762, a Bristol LD bought in France a few years ago; ex-BEA Routemaster NMY 633E (RMA20) latterly with Stagecoach; the chassis of RTL960, saved from scrap; RUF 186 an ex-Southdown Beadle-bodied Leyland Titan PD2/12 found in France and saved from scrap last summer and SKH 339B, formerly 89 HBC, an ex-Leicester PD3 which passed to Kingston upon Hull City Transport for driver training after withdrawal. It too came via Carl Ireland, last November. Two other Leicester PD3s, 94 HBC and LJF 18F, are still in France too.

Space at Keighley

The Keighley Bus Museum, featured last month, currently has space for more vehicles. One or two of the vehicles presently there are moving elsewhere and the Museum is in the process of obtaining a third shed with space for six or seven vehicles. Spaces are available to rent by vehicle owners, and anyone interested should contact the Museum's secretary, David Jones, at 47 Brentfell Drive, Burnley BB12 8AW.

Those Stratford Blues . . .

One of the great sadnesses of bus preservation is the number of vehicles which are restored only to fall back into dereliction. One which has recently been brought to our attention is Stratford Blue's sole surviving double-decker, 1950 Leyland Tiger PS2 JUE 349 which was rebuilt from a single-decker by Northern Counties in 1963.

As recently as our October 1987 issue we reported on the comprehensive restoration of this vehicle; now, less than nine years later, the bus is reduced to a hulk

KSW partnership

A group of seven Eastern National employees have set up the Eastern National KSW Preservation Group to look after one of the company's two open-top Bristol KSW5Gs. No 2383 (WNO 479) was new to Westcliff on Sea in 1953, entering service as a low-bridge bus the following year. It was converted to open-top in 1966, with conventional seating upstairs and has remained in use with its operator since. The Group is restoring the bus and taking it to rallies etc, though the company still owns it and meets its running costs. Now the group is also trying to secure the future of the other of the pair, 2384 (WNO 480). The group can be contacted at 600 Main Road, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex CO12 4LN.

Meanwhile we understand the GS at Keighley which is being modified to fit a Ford Cargo chassis has now been painted in LT Country area green. Well the top part has anyway; the lower panels are Central Area red with cream between the two. It has been dubbed the Pizza Parlour!

and has been saved for restoration again. It has gone to the Birmingham & Midland Museum of Transport at Wythall and restoration is again expected to take two years. It has been the victim of vandalism. S. G. Richards of Solihull was instrumental in introducing the Wythall people to its owner, Peter Griffin, formerly of G&G Coaches, and reports that 'not a piece of glass, mirror or light were left intact and a fire was started in the interior'.





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This is the second volume of the series to be published by the Leeds Transport Historical Society, dealing with the history of road passenger transport in the City. Volume One commenced with the early horse buses going through to the diverse scene at the close of the Victorian era. Some copies of this volume are still available at £15 + postage.

In Volume Two, Jim Soper continues the story from 1902 until another significant date, 1931, when after a succession of General Managers, things had settled down with the coming from Walsall of Mr. W. Vane Morland. It details the story of the expansion of the tramways along with the cars which were built during the Hamilton, Chamberlain and Horsfield regimes. The period saw a rapid change through the years from open-top, through open-balcony, then all-enclosed cars built from the 'twenties as the fleet was modernised with the building of over 300 new tramcars.

The short flirtation with trolleybuses between 1911 and 1928 is covered. With a maximum fleet of 15 trackless cars and three routes, the story is complex.

Motor bus operation began in 1905 and again, the full history of both vehicles and routes is included. Although the very early vehicles were unreliable, the fleet gradually expanded. More routes were introduced to give cross-city services and cover parts where tramways were not operated.

Not forgotten is the complex early history of the private bus operators in the free for all days before the Road Traffic Act, 1930, which brought regulation to the scene.

The work will be published during the summer of 1996 at a price of £39.50.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Trans Lancs Rally 1 September 1996. Details: B. Lomas

Lancashire Municipals Running Day. 13 October 1996. We are trying to form an exhibition of at least one of every Lancashire municipality for a running day. Vehicle road run for historic photo line-up at Heaton Park. Details: C. P. C. Williams.

Christmas Transport Festival 30 November-1 December 1996

Spring Transport Festival 29/30 March 1997. Contact G. Turnbull.

A Celebration of Stockport 11 May 1997. A Running Day and Rally to re-launch Stockport '91. (The last rear loader).

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ABC Travel, Ainsdale

New are appropriately-registered B24F Optare MetroRider N8, 9 ABC for use on Formby circular services 161-165, and DAF SB220/Northern Counties B49F N600 ABC, branded for service 280 (Southport-Preston-Skipton). The MetroRiders follow on from identical earlier M7, 77 and 777 ABC.

The DAF has replaced Leyland Tiger/Duple ABC 21Y, which has been withdrawn, re-registered GBG 582Y and sold to Hughes-DAF, Gomersal (dealer).

Bedford YMT/Duple C53F OSA 589W was acquired from Blythwood Motors, Glasgow (dealer) in December last, its seats being extracted for use in Leyland Olympian coach ABC 75Y, the Bedford then being sold for scrap to Wigley, Carlton (dealer).

Ambermile Group

Vehicles are now appearing under the Jowitt trading name.

Former Cynon Valley Leyland National 10351/1R/B41F LDW 363P is in stock. 12 ex-West Midlands Leyland Nationals are now in stock, Leyland-engined JOX 509/11/3/34P, NOE 550, 608R and DAF-engined ROK 475M, TOE 481/3, 520N, OOX 815R and AOL 16T. JOX 513/34P are at Barnsley and ROK 475M, TOE 481/3N, OOX 815R with K-Line, AOL 16T with Taylor.

DAF M831 RCP was sold to Hughes-DAF (dealer) on return from Godson of Leeds, J411/2 NCP following.

Leyland Nationals OKJ 514V, EPD 504V, UPB 296S and LPB 203P briefly worked with Pride of the Road at Huddersfield but have since moved on to Fleetjet at Hull.

Andrews-Sheffield Omnibus, Sheffield YT

The complete double-decker Leyland Atlantean stock has been withdrawn, comprising 1112/4/5/21-7/9/31-8/40 (UFV 112/4/5R, CRN 121/7/9S, NCK 131-8/40T), 1345/51-4 (CPO 345W etc), 1404/10/1/34/40/67/8/71-3/5/82 (KCK 204W, DHG 210/1W, LEO 734Y, VCX 340X, TRN 467/8/71-3/5V, LRB 582W) last survivor being 1351. The two single-deck East Lancs Sprint-rebodied examples, 2501/5 (IL 1501, XRF 26S) have been retained however. Also withdrawn are Bristol VRT/SL3s 1538/69 (VRP 38S, VVV 69S).

Body type

- B Single-deck bus
- C Coach
- DP Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
- H Double-decker
- L Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
- O Open-top
- CO Convertible open-top

Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given).

Door position

- F Front
- R Rear
- C Centre
- D Dual doors

Where platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on a rear entrance bus, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 't' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

Re-registrations

Re-registered vehicles are shown with their current registration, in normal type. Previous registrations then follow in *italic type*, with most recent given next, working backward in time to original mark, which is shown last.

For example, Fylde Leyland Leopard 29 (YNJ 434, HRN 97M); Southend Leyland Olympian coach 256 (A110 FDL, WDL 748, A701 DDL) this was originally A701 DDL, then WDL 748 and is currently A110 FDL.

Vehicle reports should be sent to J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2XD.

Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.

Road Car has acquired LRB 582W and TRN 467/8/72/3V, whilst CRN 121/3/4/9S, UFV 112/5R, TRN 471V, NCK 132/4/6/8/40T went to store at Yorkshire Tractor Wombwell depot, CRN 127S to Yorkshire Terrier Holbrook, CRN 122/5/6S being sold for scrap.

Phil Anslow Travel

The complete stock of Bristol REs with Smiths of Portland has been acquired and are REL6L/ECW B50F AHT 206J, YHY 586/92J and LHT 173L.

Arrowline (Travel) BB

The opening fleet incorporated Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B23F 69 (L647 DNA); 709D/Carlyle B29F 96-98 (J291-3 NNB); 709D/Dormobile B27F 107 (L646 DNA); 709D/Marshall B29F 109 (L649 DNA); 709D/Plaxton B27F 131/3/4/6/41 (J297/9 NNB, K876/9 UDB, L642 DNA); 709D/Alexander (Belfast) B27F 144/8/9 (M364/8/9 KVR) and Dennis Javelin 10SDA2119/Berkhof C32Ft 844 (K100 SLT).

New deliveries are Scania L113CRLAA/Wright B42F 1001-5 (N101-5 YVU), intended for services 19/19A in Altrincham, Sale and Wythenshawe districts.

Further transfers in are Mercedes-Benz 811D/Carlyle B33F 77, 80 (G107/10 TND) from Bee Line and Dennis Javelin 12SDA2117/Berkhof C51Ft 840 (K200 SLT) from Ambassador of Cheadle.

Withdrawals to note are of 709Ds H408/9 BVR, 609D 68 (H407 BVR) and AEC Reliance 939 (SUC 284R, I/W 8834, RGS 87R). 68 and 939 are now with North Western, H408/9 BVR passing to Cheshire Bus & Coach, Knutsford (dealer).

Bayline ST

The withdrawal of time-expired Ford Transits continues with 509/22/6 (C509/22/6 FFJ), 636/41 (D636/41 NOD) and 661/9/72-4/80/9/93-5/7/8 (C661 FFJ etc).

A very large number of Transits has been cut up for scrap on-site by the company, latest being 483/5/6/8/90 (C483 FFJ etc), 500-3/5/6/9/12/3/5/6/23/8 (C500 FFJ etc), 537/8/43/9 (C114/5/20/6 DJO), 554/6/8/62-5/7/70/1 (C404/6/8/12-5/7/20/2 AHT), 588-90 (C30-32 BPR), 592/3 (D827/30 UTF) and 661/9/73/80-2/4/93/7 (C661 FFJ etc). 522 (C522 FFJ) has escaped the torch for a new owner in Torquay.

Additionally, withdrawn 526 (C526 FFJ) and 672/4/89/94/5 (C672 FFJ etc) are in store at Torquay. Transit 586 (B250 LDL) is now in ailver grey for the Bayline Marketing Department, 657/98 (C657/98 FFJ) being transferred to ancillary stock similarly, but as maintenance vehicles. 587 (B251 LDL) has also been cut up on-site by the company.

All vehicles are now allocated to Torquay.

Bee Line

New are Dennis Dart 9.8SDL3054/Plaxton Pointer B37F 601-10 (N601-10 XJM).

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton 768 (E322 OMG) has been reinstated, but 728/62 (A109 EPA, A212 DPB) have been withdrawn, passing to James of Tetbury.

Leyland National formerly 311 (NRD 152M) has been noted under conversion to a caravan in Morecambe in March!

Unusual additions to the Brewers fleet are two Optare StarRiders, transferred within FirstBus from Quickstep, part of the Rider Group. 451 (E203 PWY) is seen in Port Talbot.

T. S. POWELL

Bee Line Buzz BB

Now transferred in from North Western stock are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 57-61 (M157/7 WWM, M59 WKA, M160 WTJ, M61 WKA); L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F 111 (D211 SKD) and Alexander B20F-bodied 112-4/7/9 (D112 SKD etc); Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 242 (ACW 765R); Leyland National 2 NL106L11/1R/B44F 301 (DBV 845W), NL116AL11/2R/B52F 263/4/7 (AFM 3, 4W, FCA 7X), NL116L11/1R/B49F 275/8 (BVP 811V, EON 823V), NL116AL11/2R/B52F 280 (FCA 10X — now with Gardner 6HLXB engine), NL116HLXB/2R/B52F 282-4 (NTU 12, 13, 15V), NL106AL11/1R/B44F 303/6/9/10 (JCK 851W, LFR 854/67/9X); Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 290 (VKE 561S); Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R/ECW H43/31F 510-5 (FBV 495-500W); Dennis Dart 9SDL3034/Plaxton Pointer B23F 853-6 (L153-6 UKB); CUE Omni/B15FL 857 (G644 EVN) and Leyland Leopard PSU3/3RT/Alexander recovery vehicle 918 (AJA 142B).

Optare MetroRider demonstrator M930 TYG was on loan some time ago, but not previously recorded.

From West Midlands Travel come 22-year old but DAF re-engined/refurbished Leyland National 11351/1R/B50F 400-9 (ROK 468/9M, TOE 486-91/7/8N); from Liverline are Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F 601/55 (DBV 135Y, PFM 128Y); from Crossville Cymru comes Mercedes-Benz 811D/Carlyle B33F 86 (G116 TND) and from an unconfirmed source, Bedford YRT/Plaxton C53F 937 (JDJ 350N).

From Northumbria comes Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 291 (PUP 505T).

Ex-Wigan Bus Company DAF SB220/Ikarus L532/3 EHD are confirmed numbered 397/8. 'Easylink' Dennis Darts 853-6 (L153-6 UKB) are now renumbered 1153-6 and are named *Beryl, Basil, Bertie and Barry* in sequence.

Withdrawals are of Dodge S46 3, 4, 7, 16, 49 (D403 NNA etc); Mercedes-Benz 709D 57 (M157 WWM); 811Ds 77, 80 (G107/10 TND); L608D 112 (D212 SKD); Leyland Nationals 230/4 (UHG 751R, UHG 231R); DAF DB250 699 (M649 RCP); MCW Metrobuses 770/80 (GOG 257W, BOK 50V), 801/4 (LOA 434X, BOK 40V) and Freight Rover Sherpa 912 (D187 NON).

3, 4, 16, 57, 112, 234, 770/80, 801/4 are all now with North Western; 77, 80 with Arrowline. 230 has gone to Martin of Middlewich, 699, which was ex-Wigan Bus Company, returning to Hughes-DAF, Gomersal (dealer).

North Western-style City Plus style of red/yellow/blue livery has been adopted on recent repaints, with 'Wigan Line' fleetnames in that town, similarly 'Leigh Line' at Leigh; Bee Line remains in use for Manchester-based vehicles.

Former North Western operations at Wallgate, Wigan passed to Bee Line last year.

Blackburn Transport

Leyland Atlanteans 126/7 (LFR 126/7T) are now reported withdrawn; 117 (CBV 117S) is now with Calderdale MBC, Halifax; 118/21-3/5/6 (CBV 118S etc) with Warrington, 120 (CBV 120S) with Benson of Greasby and 124 (CBV 124S) with Worldflight of Crewe 115/9 (PCW 115P), CBV 119S were awaiting sale late last year, 127 and 128 (LFR 128T) being stored against possible future use. Leyland Leopards 307/8 (LNE 254/5W) are also stored and are not expected to run again here.



Blackpool Transport

Eight new Optare MetroRider/B25F are on order for this year, deliveries being 589-92 (N589-92 GRN), displacing VW LT55/Optare CityPacers 551/2/62-4 (E551/2 GFR, D562-4 YCW), returned to Optare as dealer. The first MetroRider, 584 (M924 TYG) has been resealed to B25F with conventional seating to match newer sisters 585-92, following dissatisfaction with the plastic modular seating fitted when new. The Volvo Olympians also have the apparently unpopular thinly-padded modular plastic seats.

An assessment was being made in early spring as to the work required to return the stored AEC Routemasters to service. Leyland Titan PD3A/1/MCW H41/30R training bus 507 (HFR 507E) is now fitted with platform doors.

Black Prince, Morley

New is Mercedes-Benz 0.405/Optare Prisma B49F 577 (N577 EUG).

Now in stock are more Volvo Ailsas, in the shape of B55-10/Alexander RV H76D V1, V2 (A101/2 SUU), the remaining two of the trio bought new by London. They join V3 (A103 SUU) which has been under rebuild when workshop time permits for some two years.

Unusual acquisitions are former Newport Scania BR112DH/Marshall H45/31F 82-4/6, 92, 94, 101 (JBO 82W etc); in consequence, Ailsas 94 and 101 (KSD 94, 101W) are renumbered V94 and V101.

This operator remains one of the largest of the Volvo Ailsa. As many of the type have now been sold off, it is perhaps appropriate to list those in stock as at April, courtesy of reader Michael P. Nash: Alexander-bodied V1-3 (A101-3 SUU), V94, 95, V101, 108/9/13 (KSD 94W etc), 186 (UCS 186S), 249/50/4 (SSN 249S etc), 256 (PWR 256P, LES 48P), 262 (WTS 262T), 315/6/8/21/2 (NSP 315R etc), 385 (LKP 385P), 745/9/57/83 (JOV 745P etc) and Van Hool McArdle-bodied 377 (LWB 377P).

The formerly preserved Scania-MCW Metropolitan, HUA 563N, was noted at Ripley, Carlton for scrap earlier this year.

Blenkinsop, West Cornforth

Recent acquisitions are Leyland Leopard/Alexander C49F EFS 228-30S from Reynolds of Watford.

Blue Admiral FB

Transit Holdings and FirstBus exchanged contracts on the sale of Portsmouth Transit, Blue Admiral and Red Admiral on 7 March, with completion due to follow on 2 April.

Following this, there will be inter-availability of tickets between Provincial, Red and Blue Admiral. Duplication of services will be rationalised and, on the vehicle front, the Ford Transits will be eliminated as soon as possible, 20 Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B25F being due from the current bulk Badgerline Holdings order placed prior to its merger with GRT Holdings.

Leyland Atlantean 287 (XTP 287L) returned from loan to Devon General on 12 February. Open-top Leyland Titan PD2 2 (LRV 992) and 287 were not included in the FirstBus deal, being withdrawn and passed to Thames Transit, Oxford on 17 March. 2 is to be used on a tourist service between Oxford and Blenheim Palace with 287 as back-up vehicle.

Bluebird, Middleton

Ex-MTL Leyland National URA 604S is in stock in new two-tone blue/white livery.

Blue Bus, Horwich

Two further saloons are Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple Dominant C46F J1W 374 ex-Lawrenson, Earlestown and PSU3E/4R/Duple Dominant bus B55F VUP 514V from Vales of Cheetham.

Blue Bus Services, Derby BB

13 Mercedes-Benz minis and two (or possibly five) Scania N113 double-deckers are reported due, first of these noted being Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 75 (N475 XRC) in City Rider colours, with batch thought to comprise 72 onward. The new minis are to oust all the Midland Red North Dodges.

Further Leyland Fleetlines withdrawn are 48, 49 and 302 (GTO 48, 49, 302V). Fleetlines 311-3 (MTV 311-3W) are still in older-style blue/grey livery, thought not repainted since 1983. The last VW LT55/Optare CityPacers were due for withdrawal in March, these being 69, 81 and 90 (D848 CRY, E401 BHK, E217 PWY).

Brewers FB

Acquisitions are, from Quickstep, Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare DP29F E203/4 PWY and 709D/PMT DP25F 419 (F546 EJA) and from South Wales stock come L608D/Dormobile B20F 7533/69 (D533/69 FAE).

Coaches withdrawn are Leyland Tiger 118/20/1/4/6 (MKH 889/31, 774, 60, 49A), Leyland Royal Tigers 141/2 (MKH 48A, RJL 8032), Scania K112 196 (972 SYD) and K113 197 (F907 DHB). These and 198/9 (YBK 132, 605 BBO) have all been sold, most to Moseley, Shepreth (dealer).

Brighton & Hove GA

A Dennis Lance 11SDA113 chassis, labelled for the Go Ahead Group, has been inspected at Conway Street. The new Scania were due for delivery from 8 April.

Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook Warrior T4 (RFC 14T) is another arrival from Oxford for use as a driver trainer.

Withdrawn Bristol VRT/SL3 654 (AAP 654T) has been broken up by the company (in usual Go-Ahead Group fashion, where vehicles are not usually sold onward for further use). Similar 263 (JWV 263W) and 695 (EAP 995V) are now being used as a source of spare parts to keep the remaining VRTs running. Happily, VRT 603 (TPN 603S) has now been secured for preservation, and it is to appear in NBC green livery, as delivered in August 1977.

Several Mercedes-Benz 811Ds are to receive the plum/purple Service 7 livery, 340 being the first noted.

Bullock, Cheadle

A further two Scania L113CRL/Wright are N633/4 XBU.

Burnley & Pendle

An acquisition from Excelsior of Bournemouth is Volvo B10MT-50/Van Hool CH52/13F 16 (F94 AEL), now in Viscount Central colours.

Neoplan 1 (H166 RHE) is now re-registered OJ 201, Toyota 15 (K815 TJU) becoming XFK 305 and Mercedes-Benz 709D 95 (XFK 305, F95 VBW) becoming F995 DRN.

Leyland Leopards 31 and 32 (MFV 31, 32T) have been sold, 37 (MFV 37T) remaining in store.

Mercedes-Benz 811D/Robin Hood 87 (E87 HRN) has completed the programme of refurbishment of this type. All have also been converted from manual to Allison semi-automatic transmission.

Leyland National 2 45 (XRN 45V) is a new overall advertisement for Victoria Residential & Rest Home.

CMT Buses, Aintree

The batch of new Dennis Dart 9.8SDL3054/Northern Counties Paladin II B39F comprises 2005-11 (N652-8 CHF), intended for Merseytravel services 130/210. 2606/7/10/1 have already been mentioned under the C&M Travel heading. Four Volvo B10Bs are also reported on order, with bodywork unconfirmed at this time.

Cambridge Coach Services BL

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Première 350 C52F 309-12 (N309-12 VAV).

Rover of Bromsgrove operations closed down on 31 January after the loss of local contracts, but three coaches remain outstationed at Bromsgrove for the Worcester-Cambridge service. At end-January, Rover stock comprised 8 coaches, 326 passing to Sovereign (qv), 349/60/1 (YXI 2749, E360/1 NEG) retained by CCS, four — 354/9/63/74 (TXI 5497, E359/63 NEG, YXI 2747) being withdrawn and at Cambridge for disposal.

Cambus ST

New are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 205-11 (N613/6/8/20/42-4 VSS), diverted from an order for Western Scottish. New Volvo Olympians are due as Bristol VRT/SL3 replacements, whilst a pair of Dennis Darts is due for delivery as these notes are compiled.

Capital Citybus

Acquisitions to note are MCW Metrobus/H46/31F 100/9/11 (JHE 144/52/6W) ex-MTL but new to South Yorkshire, H37/29F-bodied 175 (DAE 510W) and DPH43/30F 176/7 (DAE 512/3W) also from MTL but new to Badgerline. 109/11 entered traffic still in Merseybus livery on Docklands Light Railway replacement work. Metrobus 105 is correctly-registered JHE 138W. From Wealden Beeline of Five Oak Green comes Dennis Dart 9SDL/Wadham Stringer B37F 669 (J459 JOW).

London Transport service 67 (Wood Green-Aldgate) is to be taken over from Cowie Leaside; for this, 11 new Volvo Olympian/Plaxton Palatine 1 are due as 239-49.

The loaned DAF DB250/Northern Counties, 300 (M647 RCP) is now with Blue Bus of Horwich.

Group codes

BB	— British Bus
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
CW	— Cowie Group
EY	— EYMS Group
FB	— First Bus
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
MT	— MTL Holdings
NX	— National Express
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
TR	— Transit Holdings
YT	— Yorkshire Traction

In FirstBus ownership GM North has now settled on this representation of tomato soup as its new livery. Alienated from Huddersfield by an unappreciative ridership, Mercedes-Benz/Plaxton 1807 (M249 VWU) tries its hand at wooing the good citizens of Oldham. ROY MARSHALL

Meanwhile GMS has received a batch of Volvo Olympians in Stagecoach ownership; 708 (N332 NPN) is seen in Upper Chorlton Road. JOHN YOUNG



Cardiff Bus

Further Optare MetroRiders are now in course of delivery, commencing at 134 (N134 PTG) and, in consequence, MCW Metroriders 139/41/2/4/6-9 (E139/41 SNY, E142/4/6-9 TBO) are renumbered 39, 41/2/4/6-9 to make way; they actually carry 039, 041 etc as do other vehicles numbered below 100.

Now withdrawn are MCW Metrorider 145 (E145 TBO), Bristol VRT/SL3s 328/30-4 (WTG 328T etc) and Bedford/Marshall training bus 046 (Q346 NTM), the Bedford having most recently been used as an office bus, replaced on this duty by 145, now renumbered 045. 046 has gone to a Barnsley dealer, whilst DP Metroriders 29, 31 (E129 RDW, E131 SNY) have found new owners locally with Venture Travel of Cardiff (29) and A. B. Smith of Newport (31).

Chalkwell, Sittingbourne

Acquisitions are Leyland Leopard/Plaxton C53F RHS 863W ex-Hearson, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Leyland National 10351/2R/B44F THX 130S from Wellhouse NHS Trust (Barnet & Edgware Hospitals), Burnt Oak and MCW Metrorider MF150/24/B25F E95 WKY from Aston Express, Killamarsh.

Re-registrations are of THX 130S to VIB 8319 and E95 WKY to VIB 5072.

Cheltenham Classic Bus Tours

During the summer months, former Darwen/Blackburn Leyland Titan PD2A/47/East Lancs JTF 218F will again be operating, with departures at 09.45, 11.30 and 14.15. New for this year are Cotswold Countryside tours from Cheltenham and Gloucester using the superb Bristol LL6B/Duple LTA 958. On Sundays, the LL6B goes to Chipping Camden, Mondays an Evesham circular tour, Tuesdays to Forest of Dean, Wednesday to Tewkesbury for a river cruise, Thursdays to Fairford & Bibury, Fridays to Minchinhampton, Cirencester and Chedworth and Saturdays to Prinknash Abbey and Painswick.

Cheltenham District ST

First of the five new Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander (Belfast) B25F due are 738-30 (N728-30 RDD), delivered to Stroud. Additionally, Leyland National/B44F 501 (VAE 501T) is reinstated for further service.

Now withdrawn are Bristol VRT/SL3 204 (MOU 639R), MCW Metrorider 667 (E667 JAD) and Mercedes-Benz L608D 654 (C654 XDF), first of its type to go. 204 is now with Cheltenham & Gloucester.

204 (MOU 739R) returned from loan to Circle Line at the end of January, Circle Line then providing its own VRT for CDT school service 134, 204 being moved straight away to Cirencester. Circle Line Leyland Atlantean AKV 137V is not now to carry CDT legal lettering being the nominated Circle Line-owned vehicle covering CDT service 134. Leyland National 501 (VAE 501T) went on loan to Circle Line from 7 February.

The Cheltenham Gold Cup race meeting on 12-14 March produced the usual influx of hired or borrowed vehicles. On loan from Swindon & District for the three days were Leyland Olympian/Alexander 101/4/5 (G101 AAD etc), Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 213/23/9 (REU 311S, TWS 913T, EWS 746W) and refurbished Leyland Nationals 307/10 (SAE 752S, VEU 231T).

Various double-deckers have been borrowed on a daily basis from Marchants of Cheltenham (including three Bristol VRT/SL3s only acquired from Road Car just 12 hours previously), Swanbrook of Staverton and Circle Line.

Cheltenham & Gloucester ST

Delivery of the 13 Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander (Belfast) has commenced with receipt of B25F 718-28 (N718-28 RDD) and DP25F 734/5 (N734/5 RDD). In total, seven are to go to Gloucester and six to Stroud.

The second Bristol VRT/SL3 refurbished is 226 (DHW 352W), with the highest-numbered pair, 230/1 (EWS 748/51W), now undergoing improvement.

Acquisitions are VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/28F 204 (MOU 739R) from Cheltenham District and, for spares only, similar but H43/31F VOD 598S from Circle Line.

VRT 211 (REU 309S), MCW Metrorider 602 (F54 RFS) and Mercedes-Benz L608D 660 (660 XDF) have been withdrawn. The remains of Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B49F BVP 815V have passed to Ripley, Carlton (dealer), the vehicle having been acquired back in January 1993 for use as a source of spares for refurbishment of Leyland National 2 stock. Bedford YRQ/Plaxton C45F ancillary vehicle DT2 (SNK 252M) has also passed to Ripley.

Circle Line, Gloucester ST

Unfamiliar acquisitions are former Busways Leyland Atlantean AN68A/2R/Alexander AL H49/37F SCN 247/50/5/6/64S and AVK 137V. These are being outshopped in brunswick green/cream, SCN 247S and AVK 137V being noted.

Now dispensed with are Bristol VRT/SL3s LEU 266/7P, WBD 875S, PHY 693S, Seddon Pennines ASD 841T and BSD 848T and Volvo B58/Duple KRW 532V. Wigleys of Carlton (dealer) has taken LEU 267P, WBD 875S, BSD 848T and KRW 532V. Part-cannibalised B444 WTC has been taken by a local scrap dealer.

Crosville Cymru BB

Former Davies Bedford YLQ/Plaxton C45F JTL 804V is at work on driver training, numbered in the SBB class, but awaiting confirmation.

Tow-bus Bristol MW6G G341 (811 DFM) is now re-registered to TFF 251.

Leyland Tigers CTL 47, 52 (B147 ALG, C252 SPC) have been sold to Stevensons of Uttoxeter and Mercedes-Benz L608D MMM168 (D168 VBP) to Clydeside. Meanwhile, rather unusually, the Reeve Burgess B20F body has been removed from the chassis of L608D MMM64 (D964 UDY) at Bangor and it is being used to carry water drums around the depot (not licensed to appear on the highway in this form). It retains its engine cowl/hood (in red, from its former Bws Gwynedd front end).

Bristol SC4LK/ECW SC13 (783 EFM), languishing after accident damage, has now been sold for preservation. Twin sister SC12 (782 EFM) passed to Northern Bus some time ago.

Cumberland ST

Stagecoach Manchester Volvo Olympians 701-14 (N325-38 NPN) were present at Carlisle on 15 March.

Ribble (ex-Cumberland) Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Expressliner C46Ft 1122 (J122 AAO) was on loan in mid-February for a couple of days to cover for a failed Expressliner on the service 570.

Leyland Leopard 625 (GRM 625V) and open-top Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1 MkII 1928 (ERV 251D) have been withdrawn and sold, the former passing to Brownrigg of Egremont. Former convertible open-top Bristol VRT/SL3s 2036-8 (UWV 612/8/20S) were noted in March undergoing attention at Lillyhall.

2035/76 (UWV 610/22S) and converted open-topper 2075 (XRR 175S) complete the open-top runout; apparently all are now regarded as permanent open-toppers, the roofs for two of those other than 2075 having remained in Stagecoach South territory.

Mercedes-Benz 709D 47 (E47 CHH) has been out of traffic since early February, when it left the road and came to rest in a field during very heavy snowfall on 5 February in the Millom area. Its future is under examination.

Delta, Mansfield

Dodge S56/Alexander D310/7 SDS came from Clydeside stock.

Denis's, Dukinfield

New are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver N320-2 YNC and N257-9 DUR.

Only four Leyland Nationals now remain, these being NFN 62M, JBN 948N, UPB 336S and YPF 771T.

Derby City Transport

Daimler CVG6/Roe YRC 135 remains active with Malaspina University College, Powell River, British Columbia, Canada. Via the Internet (and, kindly, Geoff Toon of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group), its operator, Mr. S. J. Bennett appeals for contacts regarding spare parts, so that he can keep the Daimler running. He may be contacted at 5183 Tanner Avenue, Powell River, British Columbia, V8A 5B4, Canada or via E-MAIL at: bennetts@aslan.pr.mala.bc.ca.

Devon General ST

Transferred in from Blue Admiral is Ford Transit/Mellor B16F 656 (D656 NOD) and from Red Admiral come twins 798 (D798 NDV) and 815/22 (E815/22 WDV).

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess 83 (F743 FDV) has been reinstated.

The PSV Circle, which is gratefully acknowledged for reports of both this fleet at Bayline, records a heavy withdrawal of minibuses by February this year, comprising Ford Transits 7, 9 (A927/9 MDV), 17 (A687 KDV), 20-22 (A260/87/8 MTA), 23/5/6 (A943/5/6 MDV), 42 (A692 MDV), 43 (A259 MTA), 481/9/97 (C481/9/97 FFJ), 535/6/40-2/8/50/1 (C112/3/7-9/23/7/8 DJO), 559 (C409 AHT), 591 (C33 BPR), 686/96 (C686/96 FFJ) and 702/3/7/42/4/56/8/63 (C702 FFJ etc).

7 (A927 MDV) has been transferred to Thames Transit, 696 (C696 FFJ) passing to Morgan of Nantyglo, 954 (H463 GTM) to Blue Admiral, but less lucky 8-10 (A928-30 MDV), 11/2/4 (A261/2/4 MTA), 17, 18 (A687/8 KDV), 21, 22 (A287/8 MTA), 23/5-8 (A943/5-8 MDV), 29, 30 (A269/70 MTA), 31-33/5-9 (A931 MDV etc), 41, 42 (A691/2 KDV), 43 (A259 MTA), 481/9/97 (C481 FFJ etc), 535/6/40-2/4/8/50/1 (C112/3/7-9/21/3/7/8 DJO), 667/86 (C667/86 FFJ), 702/3/7/42/4/56/8/63 (C702 FFJ etc) have all been cut up by the company for scrap.

Eastbourne Buses

A new DAF SB3000/Ikarus C53F is due, to be numbered 1.

Dennis Dart 21 is now in another overall advertisement livery, for Alfred Honney Mens and Ladies fashions.

The surviving Leyland Titan PD2A/30 82 (DHC 782E) was relicensed for service again on 1 March. Ex-Blackpool Leyland Atlantians 68, 69 (JFV 315/6S) were delicensed and stored at the same time.

East Kent ST

Fifty-six Mercedes-Benz are confirmed on order currently, of which further deliveries are 709D/Alexander B23F 943/5/7/9/51/3-77 (N943-77 NAP). Of these, 957/9/70/2/4/6 were delivered to South Coast Buses at Silverhill, owing to a shortage of space owing to large numbers of withdrawn Iveco TurboDailys at Folkestone and Dover. 977 is all-over white in readiness for an overall advertisement livery.

Bristol VRT/SL3 7667 (XJJ 667V) is now with Stagecoach South (Hants & Surrey) and it has been additionally on loan to South Coast Buses.

The Iveco 49.10 stock has been decimated, with the following withdrawn for disposal: 1, 2, 4 (H101 EKR etc), 11, 16 (J121/16 LKO), 35 (G35 PSR), 51, 55-58 (E151 UKR etc), 60-67, 69 (E160 UKR etc), 72-76 (F72-75 FKK, J416 TGM), 80 (E580 TKJ), 91/5/6/8 (G491 RKK, G95/6/8 SKR) and 480 (E204 EPB). With the loss of these Ivecos, the Minilink marketing name has also disappeared. A further VRT withdrawn is 7678 (CJJ 678W).

461/4/7/81 (G911/4/7/21 KWF) are all now with East Midland, whilst 73 left on the back of a low-loader. Hardwick of Barnsley (dealer) has taken 1189 (NFN 89R) and 7678 whilst 8246 (B946 CMT) is now with Province of St Albans.

Leyland Olympians 7807/10 (H807/10 BKK) have lost their names upon repainting, completing the batch in this fashion. MCW Metrobus Mk2 7775 (F775 EKM) has suffered severe accident damage at Broadstairs and has been delicensed as a result. Iveco 47 was laid up ahead of its sisters after catching fire on 29 February, being stored at Dover. Mercedes-Benz 926/31/4 were attacked by vandals at Deal in March and had to go to Thanet for repairs.

New to Kentish Bus and seen in Dartford is Optare MetroRider 803 (N803 BKN). PHILIP R. WALLIS



East London ST

Single-door Stagecoach-liveried Leyland Titans T233/82/8 (EYE 233V, KYN 82/8X) continue at work at Romford, North Street.

East Midlands ST

It is reported that accident-damaged Leyland National 2 26 (EKY 26V) is to be scrapped.

Mercedes-Benz/Optare StarRider 728 (E721 BVO) is now in Stagecoach colours ex-overall advertisement.

East Yorkshire EY

Heavy withdrawals dominate the news this month, those affected being Leyland Leopards 34 (NJI 1255), 212/40/83 (PNW 312W, NGR 120T, FKX 283T); Bristol RE open-topper 178 (PHN 178L); Ford Transits 312-4/8-21 (C312-4/8/9 DRH, D535/42 HNW); Ford R1114 363 (EWU 963T); Bedford YMT 371 (DOC 711T); Bristol VRT/SL3s 374 (CBV 14S), 704/71/3 (KKY 834P, CBV 7, 13S), 922/62-4/7-9/76/8/81-3 (LOD 722P, RKH 962-4R, SKH 967-9R, WAG 976/8S, BKH 981-3T); Leyland Atlanteans 874/5 (OTO 556/64M), 912/3/40 (JUG 4, 7P, UNA 861S).

However, RE 178, Transit 312 and previously withdrawn Ley and Tigers 27, 28 (TXY 978, YPD 123Y) have been reinstated for further service.

34 (NGI 1255) has passed to North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer) after which it was re-registered BAG 424S; 54-6 and 63 (H54, 155, 56 VRH, G391 PNV) to Roadlease, Anston (dealer); 315/8/9 (C315 DRH etc) and 981-3 (BKH 981-3T) to Houston Ramm of Sudden (dealer); 327/63 (HWE 827N, EWU 963T), 704 (KKY 834P), 909/12/3/22/43/67/9/76 (MPT 309P, JJG 4, 7P, LOD 722P, JJG 3P, SKH 967/9R, WAG 976S) to PVS, Carlton (dealer); 371 (DDC 711T) to Whitting, Pontefract (dealer); 399 (YUE 599S) to Carl Ireland, Hull (dealer).

Most interesting disposals are of AEC Routemasters 806 (RSK 254, 271 CLT) and 813 (LDS 335A, VLT 81) to Transport Resources International of Rugby, which has converted them to open-top configuration for onward export to Madeira! Similar 810 (NVS 855, WLT 757) has gone to the Eagles Venture Scout Unit of Harrogate, whilst very good news is that 808 (VLT 188) is now transferred to the company's small, but interesting heritage fleet where it accompanies 99 (DV 7890), 100 (KSU 381, 1949 MN, SS 7376), 202 (202 YTE) and 644 (VKH 44).

Late news is that Routemasters 812/6/9 (ALM 65B; CUV 210C; EDS 221A, 10 CLT) have been converted to open-top. It is thought that these will see service with EY this year.

East Yorkshire Travel

Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton C53F 78 (J343 KTT) is now in stock from Plymouth whilst former Southend Leyland Tiger 35 (XGS 769X) has been withdrawn and sold to North East Bus Breakers, Annfield Plain (dealer).

Fareway, Kirkby MT

11 London Northern Scania's have been transferred into stock, these being N112DRB/Alexander RH H47/33F S1-10, 21 (F421-9 GWG, J811/21 HMC).

Leyland Fleetlines 378/9/87/9/90/5/7/9 and 405 were delivered by 24 March, along with MCW Metrobuses 3506/11.

Finglands, Rusholme EY

Further new vehicles are Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties Palatine 1 H47/30F 1744-8 (N744-6, 47, 748 ANE). Fortunately, these have a rear lower saloon window, unlike the Alexander Royale-bodied Olympians, which are solid.

The new arrivals are Leyland Atlantean replacements, KDB 686P and ONF 695R being confirmed withdrawn.

Fishwick, Leyland

New is LAG EOS N662 KCW.

Frontline, Tamworth

Operations ceased on 3 February. Withdrawn between December and February were Leyland Tigers 40, 41 (YSU 953/4); Leyland Leopards 42 (OKY 822X), 62 (DAK 216V), 115/7/21-3 (YYJ 955, 904 AXY, JUB 531V, KUB 671V, BJT 322T); Mercedes-Benz 608Ds 131/2 (D534/8 FAE); Leyland National 2s 268-70 (MHJ 722/5/7V, STW 18, 20W); Bnristol VRT/SL3 87 (AHW 206V) and Leyland Atlantean 101 (PUA 315W).

87 has gone to Midland Red North.

Fylde Transport

Leyland Tiger TRCTL10/3RZA/Plaxton C53F 21-23 (F699, 700/3 ENE) are now in stock ex-Timeline, for use in the Seagull Coaches fleet.

Surprisingly, Leyland Tiger/Duple Dominant 13 (B43 UCK) has been withdrawn and sold, to South Lancs Transport. Leyland Leopard coaches 32-34 (PJI 5632, OHG 33, 34T) have also been withdrawn and sold.

GMN FB

New are Volvo B10B-58/Wright DP50F 544-7 (N544-7 WVR).

Further withdrawals are of Leyland National 2s 182/3 (VBG 82, 83V); MCW Metroriders 1590 (E266 REP), 1684 (E638 KYW); Dodge S56 1876 (D876 MDB); Leyland Fleetlines 4039/76 (ANA 39T, BVR 73T, both accident victims); Leyland Atlanteans 4263/73 (FVR 263/73V), 7809/28/39 (RJA 809R, UNA 828/39S) and 7951 (BNC 951T). Also withdrawn, but not previously recorded are Leyland National 108 (SKF 8T) and Atlanteans 7802/35/7/67/83/6 (RJA 802R, UNA 835/7/67S, WVM 883/6S), 7904/22/33/4/49 (ANC 904/22T, BNC 933/4/49T). However, Fleetline/Northern Counties 4975 (DWH 691W) has been reinstated.

Atlanteans 614/37 (VET 614S, XWG 637T), 7867 (UNA 867S) and Fleetline 4046 (ANA 46T) have been sold for scrap. Leyland National 108 never carried its GMN fleetnumber and has been cannibalised.

Correspondent Stephen Owen has kindly detailed vehicles offered for sale by 28 February, comprising Wigan's Leyland National 2 182 (VBG 82V), Leyland National 247 (WBN 481T), Leyland Leopards 439/44 (LTE 490/5P), Dodge 1985 (E985 SJA); Bury's Leyland Atlantean 4353 (ORJ 353W); Citibus Leyland National 2s 85, 604 (PWY 585, 604W), Leyland Atlanteans 689/90 (CWG 689/90V) and Leyland Nationals 783/7 (HPF 309N, LPF 201P); Atherton's Leyland Nationals 108/79/95/7, 202/3 (SKF 8T, RBU 179R, ABA 20/27/8T), Leyland National 2 183 (VBG 83V), Leyland Leopards 436/40/54/5/63 (LTE 487/91P, MTE 22, 23, 31R), Dodge 1894 (D894 MDB), 1906/7/9/41/77 (D906/7/9/41 NDB, D977 PJA), Leyland Fleetlines 4013/39/58/62 (XBU 13S, ANA 39T, BVR 58, 62T) and 4948 (YTE 585V) and Leyland Atlanteans 4158 (VBA 158S), 4201/6/7/24/56/7/61/75 (XRJ 201/6S, ANA 207/24T, FVR 256/7/61/75V, 4366/7/1 (ORJ 366/71W), 7685/91/8 (ONF 685R etc), 7706/19/21/4/62/7/9/71/3/9/83/7 (RJA 706/19/21/4R, UNA 762/9/71/3/9/83/7S), 7802/9/22/8/9/47/52/66/86 (RJA 802/9R, UNA 822/8/9/47/52/66S, WVM 886S), 7904/28/37/51 (ANC 904/28T, BNC 937/51T).

David R. Grasby ST

As at February this year, the fleet comprised Volvo B10M/Ikarus 3001 (6267 AC); Leyland Leopard/Plaxton Supreme IV 3007 (4012 VC); Bristol VRT/SL3/Plaxton Paramount 3200 3073 (491 GAC); Ford R1114/Plaxton Supreme IV 3086 (MKV 86V); DAF MB200/Plaxton Paramount 3200 3435 (ANA 435Y); Leyland National 3510 (CBV 780S) and Bristol VRT/SL3s 3948/9 (VTV 170S, DWF 189V).

Vehicles are operating with Stagecoach David R. Grasby fleetnames from Midland Red depots at Banbury, Leamington and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Halton Transport

Deliveries are Dennis Dart 9.8SDL3054/Marshall 76-78 (N671-3 CLV), representing an increase to the fleet with no older Leyland Nationals being withdrawn as a result.

Hornsby, Ashby

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton 2732 RH is now with East Yorkshire as its 46 (271 CLT).

Hyndburn Transport

Acquisitions are Volvo B10M-61/Van Hool 006 (FAV 8Y) and, from Centrewest, National Greenway NL116AL11/2R/East Lancs DP49F 53 (WPC 316X, 262 CLT, FCA 9X). 53 was initially placed to work in Centrewest livery, but is now in grey fleet livery.

Leyland Leopards 77/9 (MNK 423/5V), Volvo B58 005 (HFB 845X) and 007 (SWH 127T, 9874 ND, C/JF 77), MCW Metrorider 29 (E29 GCK) and Leyland Atlantean 216 (NRN 404P) have been withdrawn, 29 being first of its type to go, broken up for scrap by the company. 005, 54 (KIB 7257, LWL 55), 62 (YFR 492R), 66 (YFR 496R) and 70 (BKJ 150T) have all been sold.

Kentish Bus & Coach/Londonlinks Buses BB

Now in stock from Maidstone & District is Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F 14 (TSU 644, FKL 174Y).

Leyland Atlantean AN215 is a new overall advertisement for Zueb's Night Club.

Leicester Citybus FB

Dennis Dominators 181/6 (FUT 181/6V) and 253-5/61-3W (MUT 253W etc) are now with D Coaches of Morriston, having been delivered to South Wales Transport premises initially. Twin 180 (FUT 180V) has been noted outshopped in latest GRT-style livery, but numbered 201 for transfer to the Northampton fleet.

Dominator 143 is a new overall advertisement for Ranstad Employment Bureau and 146 for Crimestoppers, both with front ends in fleet livery.

Reader Julian Hayward kindly writes to advise another Leyland Titan PD3 still extant, semi-automatic LJF 34F in poor condition at Longcross Army Base, near Chobham. Apparently it was left there by an advertising agency some 15 years ago.

Leisurelink (Wales), Cardiff

Agreement has been reached to jointly operate the Cardiff Tour with Guide Friday, ex-Eastbourne Leyland Atlantean/East Lancs open-toppers KHC 814/5K being allocated and carrying Guide Friday and Leisurelink fleetnames.

Ex-King Alfred Roe-bodied Leyland Atlantean open-topper HOR 590E has been refurbished by Leisurelink and has been in use by the Friends of King Alfred Buses during April, prior to returning to Leisurelink (Wales), now to act as back-up for the Cardiff Tour (and for private charter etc).

Ex-Cardiff AEC Regent V 408 DBO will not be used on the Cardiff Tour any more, but will still be present and available for private charters, weddings etc.

Lincoln City Transport YT

Now in stock from Road Car are Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B52F 201/4 (EDT 201/4V) and Gardner-engined NL116L11/1R/B52F 290 (RFS 590V).

Dodge S56s 73 and 75 (D103/15 OWG) have been withdrawn and sold.

Liverbus, Huyton MT

Leyland National 2/B44F transferred in from Merseyside and outshopped in Liverbus livery are NL106L11/1Rs 5294-7 (BCW 823/4V, DBV 836/40W) and NL106AL11/1Rs 5298/9 (LFR 863/72X). 5296 is branded for 'Village Link' service 258 (Huyton-Stockbridge Village).

Leyland Atlanteans 21 (ONF 662R). 1124/37/8/41/53/5 (ONF 674R, SRJ 754/8R, ONF 671R, UNA 788S, BNC 935T) have been withdrawn.

Dealers have taken 20, 21, 29 (ONF 661/2R, RJA 704R), 30, 33 (RJA 713R, SRJ 739R), 47 (UNA 770S), 52 (UNA 851S), 81 (MNH 568V) and 1124/38/50 (ONF 674R, SRJ 758R, RJA 727R).

Volvos 101-10/2/3 are now renumbered 6901-10/2/3. Merseyrider Leyland Atlanteans 1687/9/93 were loan loan during December to cover a vehicle shortage.

Liverline, Bootle BB

Transfers in from North Western are Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R/ECW H43/31F 505/30 (FBV 490, 515W), AN68A/1R/ECW H43/31F 538 (TPU 72R) and AN68A/1R/Roe H43/30F 745 (XPG 193T).

Leyland Atlanteans 457 (NRN 400P) and 576/8/92 (HNB 31, 37N, LJA 620P) have been withdrawn, these and previously withdrawn Leyland National 212 (PTF 755L), Leyland Nationals 421/61/6/9/71 (RTF 637M, NRN 384/92/6/8P), 702/18/31/35/8/40/8 (PUF 136M, LTK 92R, VPA 154S, XPG 162/7/70/98T) passing to Martins of Middlewich (dealer).

London & Country BB

The fleet renumbering was still pending at the time of writing. Reserved for new deliveries are DSL37-55 for Dennis Dart 9SDL/East Lancs, DSL56-96 for 10.6m Dart/East Lancs (of which 26 are for this company and 15 for Southend Transport) and MM472-9 for Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B27F.

Deliveries are DS22-24 (N542-4 TPK), Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/East Lancs B40F and Dennis Lance/East Lancs B49F LS10-16, 20 (N210-6/20 TPK). New Dennis Dominators DD13-16 are at Guildford, appropriately, and are allocated for service 34 (Guildford-Camberley) but often appear on local town services.

This has enabled the last Bristol VRT/SL3s to be dispensed with, 775/6 (OBR 775/6T) being withdrawn by **Horsham Buses**, 958/60/2 (VPF 288S, WJM 820/2T) working out their last days on school contracts there also. 776 went later to Southend Transport for cannibalisation, but owing to its good condition, was used instead as a runabout and, with the imminent complete withdrawal of the breed there, was not cannibalised. Also withdrawn is Daimler Fleetline 929 (GHV 29N) while AEC Reliance RP21 (JPA 121K) has been on loan from London & Country but has now been returned. More permanent arrivals are Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Alexander AY B53F LA48, 49 (TSJ 48, 49S) from the main fleet.

AEC Reliance 161 (APM 113T) has moved from the **Guildford & West Surrey** fleet to Horsham Buses while Leyland Olympian 902 is the first of five of the type to go to Southend. Renault S56 DMB9 (E109JPL) has moved to London & Country.

Green Line-liveried Leyland National Urban Bus DP LNC463 (NWO 463R), dedicated to service 415, has been transferred to Colchester stock, retaining its DP seating and now smartly outshopped in cream and maroon.

London Coaches

Further Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/Willowbrook are in stock as BW21 (PJJ 21S) and BW82/8 (TFN 982/8T). BW75/6 and MCW Metrobus M143 are now under conversion to open-top for summer service.

Group codes

- BB — British Bus
- BL — Blazefield Holdings
- CW — Cowie Group
- EY — EYMS Group
- FB — First Bus
- GA — Go-Ahead Group
- MT — MTL Holdings
- NX — National Express
- ST — Stagecoach Holdings
- TR — Transit Holdings
- YT — Yorkshire Traction

MTL MT

Orders call for 20 Scania L113/Wright Endurance B41F for June/July delivery, Liverpool (services 12/13) forming part of the West Derby Road corridor upgrading scheme.

Deliveries are of Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties Countybus Palatine II H43/28F 271-9/81-96/8/9, 301/2 (N271 CKB etc) and 303-5 (N303-5 CLV). 288 was delivered registered N228 KKB. Also received are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B33F (B33F+23 or B36F+19 convertible) 7531/2, un-registered on receipt.

Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance B51F N973 YRW was noted at Edge Lane on 19 March.

Leyland Tiger coach 7013 (CKC 624X) has been damaged in a 'hit and run' incident in Rochdale and its future is in doubt as a result.

Having been transferred from London Northern only recently, Volvo Ailsa B55-10s 0082/3 (A101/2 SUU), formerly numbered V1/2, have been sold to Black Prince of Morley.

Leyland National 2 6150 (XLV 150W) is a new overall advertisement, for VNC Lifeline and Leyland Atlantean 1056 for the *Liverpool Echo*.

Sixteen Leyland Titans now carry service branding, for services 20/21; they are 2059, 2245/7/56/7/69/76, 2449/64/72/89/91/4, 2698 and 2736/46. However Leyland National 2s 6141-6 have been reallocated for use on the evening service 20 in a bid to reduce vandalism.

Leyland Atlantean 1704 has been in use at Green Lane as a temporary towing bus, 1744 similarly at Gillmoss.

Sightseers Leyland Olympian coach 507 (A507 GPC) is now re-registered A12 MTL. The other Olympian coach is receiving an overall advertisement for the *Liverpool Echo*. Now in Sightseers livery are 0001/2/34/61/2, 0507, 1847, 6149, 7032/4/5/7/40-2. Happily, 1300 retains its heritage green livery.

Wirral Peninsula Leyland Atlantean 1975 (DEM 775Y) was stolen from Laird Street on 4 March and recovered after crashing into a brick wall and lamp post in Borough Road.

Some interest has been caused by the filming on Channel 4 TV series 'The Beat Goes On' at the rear of Edge Lane Works, using many vintage cars and vans, along with AEC Regents A344 (HKF 820), A40 (NKD 540) and AEC Regal coach FVY 410.

MTL Trust Holdings kindly provide quarterly news bulletins to *Buses*. The forthcoming issues are due in July and October this year and January and April 1997 at a subscription rate of £8.50 for the four. Readers interested in this news in full should send a cheque or postal order (made payable to Merseyside Transport Ltd) to David Thomas, Projects Officer, Merseybus Travel Shop, 3/4 Williamson Square, Liverpool L1 1EQ.

MTL London MT

Twelve MAN 11.220/Marshall saloons have arrived for service 95.

Maidstone & District BB

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer demonstrator N305 DHE has been inspected at Maidstone.

Kentish Bus Metroriders were expected on loan to cover Sittingbourne services 344/345 from 14 April until the arrival of new Mercedes-Benz minis.

Olympians 5891/8 recently visited the Transport Research Laboratory in connection with their longterm operation on bio-diesel fuel. Greenenergy diesel is now being used by one of the pair.

Marshall, Sutton-on-Trent

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 3500 C49F VL42 (H3 YRR) is now in stock.

Maxfield, Aughton

Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/Northern Counties H43/31F JUM 91V is in stock ex-Yorkshire Rider.

Mayne, Manchester

Scania L113/East Lancs demonstrator M78 WKX has been on trial. It is thought that Scania is to become the standard chassis marque here, hence the early disposal of Dennis Dominators 36-38 (K36, 37 XNE, K38 YVM) to London & Country recently. Further supporting this theory, four Scania N113/East Lancs Cityzen are on order, but detracting from it, the two Dennis Javelin 12SDA2119/UVG Unistar C55F have now arrived as 67, 68 (N67, 68 YVR), along with another Bova Futura coach.

Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook Warrior rebody 22 (LIW 1322) is also thought withdrawn as are Leyland Fleetlines 6, 32 (ULS 666T, GSC 857T).

Acquisitions meanwhile are of Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/Northern Counties H43/32F 5, 6 (MNC 487/8W) ex-Birkenhead & District and now re-registered IAZ 4775/6 respectively.

Maypole, Lathom

Under repaint into fleet livery (by the Treasurer of the Lancaster & Morecambe PSV Society, Ambrose Fox) in March were Leyland Tiger PS1/Alexander C35F CWG 286 and Leyland Tiger Cub PSUC1/2/Duple C41F WND 477.

Mercury, Hoo

Ex-Kelvin Central Volvo Ailsa B55-10/Alexander H44/35F LHS 749V is now in stock.

Merseyline, Garston

Arrivals from GM Buses North are Leyland Fleetlines TWH 703/4T, BCB 617V and DWH 685W, all new to LUT.

Metroline

Further detail on current orders are that they call for 22 Volvo Olympian/Alexander R-type dual-door are on order for service 52 (Willesden-Victoria) and 35 Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Plaxton Pointer are also due, 23 of these for services 251 (Edgware-Amos Grove), 288 (Queensbury-Edgware), 303 (Edgware-Colindale) and 305 (Edgware-Queensbury). All the new vehicles will have engines to Euro 2 specification.

Metropolitan Omnibus Co, Darlaston

Further Dodge S56/Alexander B25F are D234/56 NCS ex-Western Scottish and similar D304/7 SDS from South Lancs Transport. From Timeline comes Mercedes-Benz 811D/Wright B29F G737 NNS.

South Lancs S56/Northern Counties B22F D706 TWM and D849 LND and Reeve Burgess B25F-bodied D110 OWG have been on loan, as have S56/Reeve Burgess B23F D117-9 LTA and S56/Dormobile B25F E998 AKO from Martins, Coldmeace (dealer).

Ford Transit B731 YUD has been withdrawn and sold to Tellings-Golden Miller, Byfleet and MCW Metrorider E811 UDT now with Cardiff Bluebird.

Midland Fox BB

Ten new Scania L113/East Lancs in the new Urban Fox livery are now in service.

It is reported that new Volvo Olympians are also on order, to be based at Wigston with October delivery.

Midland Red South ST

New are 832/3 (N182/3 CMJ), Iveco 59.12/Alexander (Belfast) B29F.

Further arrivals from Busways are Leyland Atlantean AN68A/2R/Alexander H49/37F 978-81 (SCN 276/81S, AVK 181V, VCU 304T).

Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton 3002 (3669 DG, YKV 811X) is now re-registered again to ARW 163X and has been withdrawn. Now renumbered are 2510 (CBV 780S) to 3510, 2571 (NOE 571R) to 571, 259 (HEU 122N) to 597, 3015 (NPA 230W) to 15 and 3028 (NAK 28X) to 28.

Withdrawals to record are of Leyland Leopards 20, 3026 (TVC 504W, ELJ 209V); Ford Transits 361/2/8/73 (C702/3 FKE, D315 WPE, C718 FKE); Freight Rover Sherpa 483 (D273 OOJ); Leyland Nationals 598/9 (KHT 124P, WFR 392V); Bristol VRT/SL3s 935/6 (DBV 31W, URF 661S); Leyland Fleetline 953 (OJD 241R); DAF MB200 3021 (B21 AUS). However, Leyland National 2510 (CBV 780S) has not been withdrawn after all.

Milton Keynes Citybus ST

Mercedes-Benz L608D DP 49 (D149 VRP) and Bristol VRT/SL2 3441 (JIT 441N) have been withdrawn, Southern National acquiring the former. VRT/SL3 3645 (OFA 645P) is now in use as a ticket machine training unit.

The PSV Circle records that this fleet is to be absorbed into the United Counties fleet, using the name Stagecoach Milton Keynes. 50 brand new group-standard Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander are due, assuming Stagecoach retains ownership of MKCB (see 'News').

Recently added to the London Coaches fleet is this ex-East Kent Bristol VRT/Willowbrook, BW88 (TFN 988T) which has been converted to open-top.

PHILIP R. WALLIS

In service in Liverpool on one of the cross-Mersey Silver Service routes is a recent Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympian, MTL 0282 (N282 CKB).

TONY WILSON



North Western BB

New are Dennis Dart 9.8SD/3054/East Lancs B40F 1255-64 (N255-64 CKA).

Acquisitions to record are Leyland National 10351A/1R/B49F 260 (J0X 522P), 10351B/1R/B41F 314 (BPL 495T), 10351B/1R/B44F 376 (GMB 666T) an Ford Transit/Dormobile B16F 974 (C50 WBF) from Midland Red North; Leyland National 10351A/1R/B41F 333 (NPK 258R) and 10351B/1R/B41F 314/55 (BPL 476T, YPL 399T) from Northumbria; Dodge S46/Northern Counties B22F 3, 4, 16 (D403/4/16 NNA), Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 57 (M157 WWM), L608D/Alexander B20F 112 (D212 SKD), Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 234 (UHG 751R) and MCW Metrobus DR102/H43/30F 770/80 (GOG 257W, BOK 50V), 801/4 (LOA 434X, BOK 40V) from Bee Line; un-numbered Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F MAR 781P, MLJ 919P and 11351A/1R/B49F PKP 551R ex-Maldstone & District; Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R/Alexander B53F 938/50/1 (WSU 442/50/1S) and PSU3F/5R/Plaxton C53F 954 (MNX 305, LTY 559X) ex-Clydeside; 609D/Reeve Burgess B20F 68 (H407 BVR) and driver trainer AEC Reliance 6U3ZP/Plaxton C53F 939 (SUC 284R, I/W 8834, THS 87R) from Arrowline; Mercedes-Benz 811D/Marshall B31F 195/7 (M689 JUF, M998 XRF) ex-James, Ormskir; Leyland Leopard PSU3B/4R/Plaxton towing vehicle 914 (GGR 406N) from unconfirmed source.

Withdrawn late last year were Leyland Nationals 290/2/3/7 (VKE 561S, NEV 681M, GHB 689N, HFM 177N); Leyland Atlanteans 414/22/32/48/54/9/63/78/93-7/9 (RTF 629/38/48M, GBV 133/9/44N, NRN 371P, JPL 190K, GBV 103-7N, RCN 99N), 574/7/81-6/8-91 (JND 496N, HNB 33N, JND 984, 582N, JDB 112/4/5/22N, KBU 917P, KDB 685P, LJA 601/16P), 710 (SCD 730N); Bristol VRT/SL3s 555/6 (ODM 410V, RMA 436V); Leyland Tiger 820 (A40 SMA). Further heavy withdrawals then culled Leyland Nationals 318/37 (YFY 8M, UPB 327S), 818 (YRN 818V); Leyland Atlanteans 484/6/8/90/2 (RFR 412/06/22P, SFV 429P, GBV 102N), 516/7/36 (FBV 501/2W, NNO 65P), 712/5/23/43/7 (SCD 733N, LCD 42P, UPK 139S, XPG 178/89T); Bristol VRT/SL3s 557/9 (RMA 438/41V) and Ford Transit 971 (C460 SJU). Leyland Nationals 328/9 (LPB 209/19P) have continued in service and were not withdrawn as anticipated.

205/9/32/34/5/60/92/3/7, 318/27/30/75/8/97, 411/4/22/32/45/7/8/53/4/9/63/78/84/6/8/90/2/3/5/6/9, 536/55/7/9/60/74/7/81-91/4/7, 709/10/2/5/23/43/7, 820/5-7 have all gone to Martin of Middlewich (dealer).

Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 57-61 (M157/8 WWM, M59 WKA, M160 WTJ, M61 WKA); L608Ds 111-47/9 (D211 SKD etc); Leyland National 242 (ACW 765R); Leyland National 2s 263/4/7/75/8/80/2-4 (AFM 3, 4W, FCA 7X, BVP 811V, EON 823V, FCA 10X, NTU 12/3/5Y), 301/3/6/9/10 (DBV 845W, JCK 851W, LFR 854/67/9X); Leyland Atlanteans 510-5 (FBV 495-500W), Dennis Dart 853-6 (L153-6 UKB); CUE Omni 857 (G644 EVN) have been transferred to Bee Line and Leyland Atlanteans 505/30/8 (FBV 490, 515W, TPU 72R), 711/45 (SCD 731N, XPG 193T) to Liverline.

City Plus livery is applied with different fleetnames depending on allocation; 'City Plus' has been noted on Dennis Darts at Bootle, 'Runcorn Busway' for vehicles allocated to Runcorn and 'North Western' for vehicles at Warrington. 1258/9/62 have temporary Park and Ride fleetnames for an experimental service between a secure carpark at Stanley Dock, Liverpool and the City Centre. Branding for service 82 is carried by 1219/34/49/55/60/1/4, service 86 by 1241/7/8 and services 143/144 by 150/1.

The British Bus Group on-bus video units have proved an attractive target for thieves, with a break-in at Bootle depot involving the loss of several of these units.

Nottingham City Transport

Further deliveries are Volvo B10B-58/Alexander Strider B51F 612-5 (N612-5 YRA). Due shortly are Optare MetroRiders 220-4 and Volvo Olympian/East Lancs 490/1, as well as two ex-demonstrators as 764/97.

The second double-deck Dennis Arrow/Northern Counties Palatine II is 397 (N397 WVO).

Bova demonstrator M784 RYV has been on loan as has Volvo B10M/Plaxton M26 KWK.

Renault-Dodges 136/8/9 (D446 GLS, E138/9 ATV) were reinstated in January.

Withdrawals are Leyland Fleetlines 94, 95 (HNN 114/5V), Leyland Atlanteans 637-46/59-65/7/8 (ARC 637-46T, BTV 659-61T, XNN 662-5S, XTV 667S, ARC 668T) and Renault-Dodges 126-37/40/1/4-6 (D126-35 URC, D446 GLS, B737 KTO, E140 BNU, E577 ANE, F144-6 GVO) and Leyland Tiger 774 (A129 EPA). The last remaining Alexander DP23F-bodied Renault-Dodge is 109 (E109 JNH), currently confined to the City University-Clifton service; 103-5 (E103-5 JNH) remain in longterm loan to Barton, 107 (E107 JNH) with Dunn-Line of Nottingham.

Renault-Dodge 122 (D122 URC) has been broken up for spares by the company at Parliament Street depot and 128 (D128 URC) passing to Wigley, Carlton (dealer) for scrap. Atlanteans 637/62/3/5 (ARC 637T, XNN 662/3/5S) have followed older brothers to Guide Friday while 656 (BTV 656T) is now with Winsom of Loughborough, 658 (BTV 658T) going to Porteous of Anlaby and 659/61 (BTV 659/61T) to Reid of Bedford. Tiger 774 (A129 EPA) is now with Haywood of Scunthorpe.

Further re-registrations are of Leyland Tiger 777 (77 RTO, NDE 749Y) to ATO 57Y; Tiger 783 (83 RTO) to A913 FRC; Royal Tigers 785/6 (E785/6 BTV) to 75, 83 RTO respectively; Volvo B10M-61 787 (UTV 222S, B871 XWR, 4831 WA, B161 XWR, EBW 40A) to 77 RTO; Tiger 795 (75 RTO, WAU 795Y) to ATO 58Y.

Parfitts, Rhymney Bridge

Acquisitions are Leyland Tiger TRBTL11/2R/Duple DP47F 698/9 (EWR 656/7Y) from Yorkshire Rider. Leyland Nationals 383/93/7 (BYW 383V etc) are back from new parent company Rhondda after a period on loan, but 393 was immediately withdrawn.

Leyland Leopard 371 (GGM 71W), Leyland Nationals 482/4 (YYE 275T, THX 263S) and Duple-rebodied Leyland Tiger 901 (AAX 311A, SDW 912Y) have been withdrawn and Leopard/Duple reboddy 370 (MNY 892X, WHA 243H) has passed to Hatton of St. Helens and Plaxton-bodied 374 (GFV 183S) to Henderson of Talbot Green. The cannibalised remains of Leyland National 476 (YDW 398T) have been sold for scrap.

Phoenix North West, Cleveleys

This is a new operator, interestingly operating franchised services on behalf of Blackpool Transport, Dormobile-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds being operated in full Blackpool black/yellow 'Handybus' livery. In stock are 801-3 (H611-3 CGG) from Lofty of Mickle Trafford, 804 (H804 SFP) from Kinch, Barrow-upon-Soar and 808 (J608 KGB) from D&N Travel, Ystradgynlais.

A Mercedes-Benz 811D/Mellor is on order to become 805.

Preston Bus

A further six Optare MetroRiders are on order, but these will be of the shorter 25-seat model and will be numbered 11-16 to follow on from similar 1-10. They will be the last new vehicles with 'Euro 1' engines and they will bring the MetroRider stock here to 28 vehicles. A Marshall-bodied low-floor demonstrator is expected on loan shortly as is a low-floor Dennis Dart.

Meanwhile four more Optare MetroRider MR17/B29F are now in traffic as 28-31 (N428-31 GBV), with minor detail differences to predecessors 20-27. The Preston coat of arms and fleetname is placed forward, above the front wheelarches (to permit advertising) and the matt black strip below the rear windows is omitted.

Four Northern Counties-bodied Dodge minis have gone as a result of the new arrivals, these being 60, 70/1/4 (D760 YCW, D870/0 ABV, D74 AFV), these including the last two with DP seating (70, 71). 71 was sold very rapidly indeed, being collected by its new owner (a church, on the Hebridean Isle of Tiree) on the very day of its withdrawal. 47 (E47 KBV) has gone to a Blackpool-area independent.

A no-doubt welcome visitor to Deepdale Road workshops was 1952 Leyland Titan PD2 rebuild PRN 761, which is happily being restored to 1961 condition, when fresh from its metamorphosis from 7ft 6in PD2 to 8ft PD3 using the skill of this operator's workshops. It is to be used by a Carlisle businessman thereafter as a promotional vehicle. Also visiting has been ex-Fishwick Leyland Olympian/Weymann B44F 521 CTF, recently acquired by a preservationist from Green Bus of Great Wyrley.

Provincial FB

Orders now call for 20 new Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B27F to standard FirstBus specification, due to commence delivery in April to oust Iveco 49.10 stock and a few Leyland Nationals.

Leyland National 306 (NPD 154L) has been withdrawn and has been heavily cannibalised, but withdrawn and cannibalised early native example 13 (HOR 413L) has been acquired for preservation and restoration by correspondent Mark Willis.

Iveco 59.12 164 (K164 PPO) is a new overall advertisement for Radio Victory, whilst Leyland National 71 (UFH 848S) is now in a scheme for Solent Citroen and has been transferred to the Portsmouth fleet and renumbered 371. Leyland National 376 (WFX 257S) has been outshopped in the new cream-based livery ex-emerald green.

Of the seven Leyland Nationals sold to PVS during January, only 30, 35 and 39 are being broken up by them, 17, 26, 393 and 403 being dismantled by Trevor Wigley, also at Carlton.

People's Provincial is warmly welcomed as another major operator to kindly offer up to the moment source data to Fleet News.

Further to the March report, Iveco 49.10s 137-9 are registered G137-9 WOW and Leyland National/B49F 363 (MJT 880P) was omitted.

Certain Tendered status vehicles have the indicative 'T' placed as a suffix (instead of a prefix) by the fleetnumber; it can also appear as just a single letter below the windscreens on the nearside, apart from the fleetnumber itself.

Red & White ST

Renault S56/Reeve Burgess B25F 25 (G24 CSG) is now reinstated for further service; however, this and the other remaining Renault-Dodges, Ivecos and Mercedes-Benz L608Ds are all due for replacement during April and May by new Stagecoach Group standard 709D/Alexander minis.

Rhondda Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW 717 (GTX 741W) was on loan at Chepstow for a week in January.

Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 281/7 (D950 UDY, C820 SDY) have been withdrawn.

The ex-Whites of Calver Dennis Javelin/Duple coaches 952-4 are now in semi-coach livery for use on a new Cardiff-Cheltenham limited-stop service.

By mid-December, two years after Stagecoach takeover, 174 out of the 230-strong operational fleet had lost Red & White livery in favour of Stagecoach colours.

Rhondda

Transferred in from Parfitts' stock is Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B43F 99 (J454 JRH), quickly outshopped in standard Rhondda livery.

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount 908 (AAL 520A, SDW 924Y) is reinstated for further service.

Unfortunately, new Mercedes-Benz/Optare Prisma 551 has sustained severe front-end accident damage, such that it will be out of service for some time.

Tiger/East Lancs 1995 DP reboddy 703 (G399 PNN) is now re-registered A13 RBL; Volvo B10M/East Lancs 1995 DP reboddy 704 (B660 EGG) similarly becomes A14 RBL and B10M/Van Hool 705 (B947 ASU) is now A15 RBL.

Parfitts' Leyland National 383/93/7 (BYW 383V etc) have now returned home off-loan.

Now withdrawn are Ford Transit 24 (D525 HNW), MCW MetroRiders 2103/13 (F103/13 YWO) and Leyland Tigers 904/8 (AAL 587/20A, SDW 920/4Y). 2103/13 have been sold as has the cannibalised remains of Leyland National 629 (WUH 162T).

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CW	Cowie Group
EY	EYMS Group
FB	First Bus
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MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction



Sussex Bus is using this Urban Bus conversion of a Leyland National, XIA 857.

PHILIP LAMB

Ribble ST

Acquired from Fife Scottish is Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B52F 348 (NLS 988W) based at Clitheroe.

Mercedes-Benz 709D 580 is a new overall advertisement for the *Chorley Guardian*, 582 for MPH Windows, Leyland National 2 871 for Chorley Town Centre Shopping, Leyland Olympian 2187 for Southport Flower Show and 2195 for Lancashire County Council bus travel. 2191 is another repainted into black/gold Unisprint livery. Leyland National 2 866 is now in standard Stagecoach colours ex-75th Anniversary special scheme, Olympian 2145 similarly ex-overall advertisement.

Now withdrawn is Leyland National 2 818 (YRN 818V).

Leyland Titan PD3/5 formerly 1817 (TCK 817) has been noted for sale earlier this year, now fitted with twin staircases, front and rear, but no seats, having been with a religious group.

Riggott, Kinsley

A third ex-Western Scottish Duple 425 Integral acquired is C207 CCS (VLT 81, C205 HSD).

Road Car YT

Further acquisitions are Dodge S56/Reeve Burgess B25F 73 and 75 (D103/15 OWG) from Lincoln City, 84 (E184 UWF) from Barnsley & District. Further Leyland Atlanteans acquired as Bristol VRT/SL3 replacements are AN68A/2R/East Lancs H47/35F 734/5 (YJK 934/5V) from Eastbourne.

Ex-Ipswich Atlantean/Roe 1329 (SDX 26R) is another converted to single-door H43/29F from dual-door H43/26D, whilst Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Paramount C53F 416 (ESK 965) has been removed from the coach fleet and fitted out for OPO for use on service X3 (Lincoln-Grimsby).

Now withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 1, 3, 5 and 11 (D501 NWG etc), Leyland National 2s 201/4 (EDT 201/4V) and Gardner-engined 290 (RFS 590V), along with one more VRT, 1955 (LVL 810V).

Sales are of L608Ds 1, 3, 5, 10 (D510 NWG) and 11 to Norfolk Green of Kings Lynn, Leyland National 2s 201/4/90 to Lincoln City, VRTs 1902/42/3 (XAK 902T, KTL 25, 26V) to Marchant of Cheltenham and Leyland National 2801 (UFE 803M) to PVS, Barnsley (dealer).

Ross, Featherstone

MCW Metroriders E262 EHE and E413 EVH have both passed to North East Bus Breakers of Annfield Plain (dealer).

Rossendale Transport

The new Dennis Javelin is of type 12SDA2159/Plaxton Première 350 C48Ft 300 (N300 EST).

MCW Metrorider 57 (E57 KHG) has become first of its type to be withdrawn and is being cannibalised for spares. Leyland Leopard 72 (PJI 9172, WEC 594Y, PJI 9175, JNH 183Y) has also been retired, being sold to Cartmell of Burnley, from which it came.

Acquired ex-Rhondda MCW Metrorider MF150s F111/5 YWO are now numbered 41, 42 respectively and newly-acquired 39, 40 (F103/13 YWO) are DP25F and DP23F in sequence.

5 (D21 CFL) now carries Ellen Smith Elite UK Tours and Estelle Travel Agencies lettering on fleet livery and 316 (NIW 6517) now carries Ellen Smith Grand Luxe livery.

Shaw Hadwin

New is Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C53F N781 PEC.

RIB 5092 (E901 UNW) is now re-registered XJF 386 and XJF 386 (G951 KJX) is now RIB 5092.

Shearings

Deliveries are Volvo B10M-62/Van Hool C46Ft 701/3/13/6/20 (N701 UVR etc).

The Shires BB

Although it was inimated at the launch of 'The Shires' that the new livery would not be applied to the ageing Bristol VRT/SL3 and Leyland National stock, VRT 900 (CBD 900T) has emerged in the new blue and yellow livery with 'Luton & Dunstable' fleetnames.

Silver Wing, Bristol

The first MCW Metroriders in service in the Bristol area are E140 SNY, E143 TBO, which are B23F and are ex-Cardiff Buses 140/3.

Skills, Nottingham

Coaches ordered for the 1996 season are six Volvo B10Ms and a DAF SB3000, all with Plaxton Première C49Ft bodywork and automatic transmission. DAF has only recently been added to the list of chassis available with Plaxton bodywork.

Bob Smith Travel, Langley Park

Volvo-engined Leyland National AKU 166T is now in use. Volvo-engined Leyland National demonstrator GBF 74N has also been at work here on service 754 (Langley Park-Durham).

Smiths Happiway-Spencers, Wigan

The penultimate AEC supplied to Smiths, AEC Reliance 6U32R/Duple Dominant II C57F 107 (BTB 690T) is now secured for preservation.

Solent Blue Line

The last Leyland National has been withdrawn and was 422 (FPR 64V), whilst Bristol VRT/SL3s 676/7 (YDL 676T, FDL 677V) have gone back to Southern Vectis off-loan.

Ford Transit 225 (C225 XRU) is now with Cowdrey of Gosport. Highbridge VRT 153 (LHG 453T) is now languishing at Barton Park in cannibalised condition.

Southampton Citybus

Due at the time of writing are 10 Dennis Dart/Plaxton and a Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton coach.

Leyland Atlantean 133 (STK 133T) has been renumbered 'on paper' to 1133. Meanwhile, 134 (TTR 168H) has been withdrawn and scrapped by the company at Portsmouth depot.

Southdown

Preserved 1966 Leyland Titan PD3/4/Northern Counties 'Queen Mary' 294 (FCD 294D) has now had its staircase and full seating restored, after many years in use as an ancillary vehicle and it is back in traditional Southdown green and cream. Unfortunately, Wigley of Carlton (dealer) has scrapped twin 295 (FCD 295D), but not before making available parts for 294. 960 (HCO 343B, 960 CUF) has also been scrapped, but 972 (972 CUF) remains in use as a fruit-pickers' transport at Kinpurney Farm, Newtyle, Angus, having been in non-PSV use for some time. 270 (BUF 270C) was scrapped by Rigby of Lathom last year, 273 (BUF 273C) now coming to rest with London Bus Export, Lydney (dealer) after use by 'hippies'.

Good news indeed is the rescue of 403 (AOR 159B, 403 DCD) for preservation, the intention being to restore this vehicle in NBC green livery, which will pleasantly compliment those in traditional Southdown green and cream. Twin 405 (PRX 189B, 405 DCD) is now owned by Dixons Currys and was under conversion to a mobile showroom in white and red livery late last year (by London Bu Exports of Lydney). 408 (WRU 701B, 408 DCD) is still with LBE, but now reported as derelict, as is 269 (BUF 269C) with Karparts, Braidwood. Less-common Panoramic Queen Mary 363 (HCD 363E) is now acquired by a preservationist in Leeds. Panoramic 365 (HCD 365E) is now in use with Breslin of Aberdeen, to transport vintage tractors and stationary engines and is fitted with a tail ramp.

Early Bristol VRT/SL 2098 (OCD 768G) is now with Jobus, Salisbury as non-PCV, but Silcox has scrapped long-serving 2100 (OCD 770G). Convertible open-top Bristol VRT/SL3s 612/8/20 (UWV 612S etc) are now regarded as permanent open-top, having been separated from their roofs. 616 (UWV 616S), still with Kent Coastal Radio at Margate was re-roofed in mid-October by East Kent at Thanet.

Southend Transport BB

Services were revised from 18 May in agreement with Thamesway, with inter-availability of tickets and elimination of wasteful duplication. Just three Bristol VRT/SL3s survived, recently-recertified 304 (DWY 146T) and overall advertisements 351 (YBF 686S) and 307 (WTU 473S).

Daimler Fleetline 359 (WJN 359J) has now gone from Colman Foods, Norwich which had used it for many years as a mobile exhibition unit, in the care of the late Brian Moxham (who, when at Southend Transport as driving instructor, taught your Fleet News Editor to drive using Leyland PD3 316).

The two AEC Routemasters not previously traced are now known to have been exported; 111 (ALM 101B) is with McDonalds Restaurants at Apolda, near Weimar, Germany whilst 117 (682 DYE) is with the same owner as a children's party bus also, but at an unknown location, also in Germany, both reliveried in LT red. 112 (CUV 124C) is under preparation for sale by Brakell Omnibus Sales and was noted at Cobham recently in red livery with white band, whilst the lone RCL, 121 (CUV 256C) is also with Brakell and for sale. Only preserved 116 (543 CLT) now wears Southend colours and, over two years since the end of RM operation, only 101 (OYM 413A, VLT 12) has been scrapped, all 22 others being in active use or awaiting sale for use.

Apart from running its coaches in Green Line livery, Southend Transport is now progressively being taken into the 'London Country Group'. Indeed, platform staff have now been issued with soft kit-bags (in place of traditional machine boxes), in green, with London & Country Group logos. Contrary to an earlier report, fleetnames are not (yet) being amended to L&C's standard font.

South Lancs Transport, St Helens

Deliveries are of Dennis Dart 9.8SDL/Plaxton Pointer B40F N192 BNB and B38F J7 SLT. After only a week, N192 BNB was re-registered in usual style to J6 SLT. To make way for these, Mercedes-Benz 709D J6 SLT is now J65 UNA and J7 SLT is now J998 TVU.

Acquired additions are Dodge S56/Alexander D303 SDS ex-Western Scottish; Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R/Duple Dominant IV C49F UWY 63X, PSU3E/4R/Plaxton Supreme IV C53F NPA 226W and Leyland Tiger TRBTL11/2R/Duple Dominant (bus) DP47F A667 KUM EWR 656/7Y all from Rider York; Tiger TRBTL11/2R/Duple Dominant (bus) DP47F B43 UCK, perhaps a surprising release from Fylde Borough stock. Of these, UWY 63X and NPA 226W moved on to Nip-On, St. Helens, A667 KUM to Blue Bus of Horwich and EWR 656/7Y to Rhondda Buses.

Now sold are Leyland Tiger Cub/Duple Britannia C38F WND 477 to Maypole Coaches of Lathom, Leyland Leopard/Plaxton Derwent JDK 922P (minus running units) to preservationists for restoration, Mercedes-Benz 709D/Bence F71 SJX to Tellings-Golden Miller, Byfleet and 709D/Plaxton Beaver J65 UNA to Luton & District. Dodge S56 D863 NVS is under cannibalisation and similar D706 TWM is also now withdrawn.

South Manchester, Hyde

Daimler Fleetline CRG6LXB/Northern Counties H43/32F GNC 288N is in use here, ex-Stotts of Oldham. Also acquired are dual-door Leyland National 143 (THX 143S) new to London and DAR 122T new to Eastern National.

Southport & District MT

Reported due into stock are six Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance and three or four Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties DPs, all due to oust Leyland Nationals. At least three of the B10Bs are to gain branding for new service 17 (Banks-Formby), two noted being 6516/24, the Olympians for service 284 (Crossens-Liverpool), the latter ousting older Olympians 0261-4 (F261-4 YJT) to Southport local services 3 and 7 (High Park/Russell Road-Carr Lane).

Additions here have been Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/Alexander H43/32F 1978-82/7 (DEM 778Y etc) from Merseybus, Leyland National 2 NL116AL11/1R/B49F 6139/40 (XLV 139/40W) from Lancashire Travel, along with new Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance B49F 6558/9/99, 6601 (M558/9 WTJ, N599, 601 CKA). 6559 has been adopted as a company showbus.

Leyland Atlanteans 1821-4 (RBG 821T, TWM 209-11V), Leyland National 2s 6103/4 (VBG 103/4V) and Volvo B6s 7209-16/8/9 (L209 TKA etc) have been transferred away, 1821-4 to Merseybus stock at Green Lane, the Leyland Nationals and B6s to Lancashire Travel stock at St Helens.

South Wales Transport FB

Bristol VRT/SL3 976 (BEP 976V) was reinstated in January, but withdrawn again in the same month. Also taken out of service are Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 7533/69 (D533/69 FAE).

Sovereign Bus & Coach BL

New are Volvo B10B/Wright Endurance DP49F 106-10 (N106-9 VGS, M310 KHP).

Acquisitions are Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C50F 321/4/5 (F421/4/5 DUG) from Cambridge Coach Services, B10M-61/Plaxton 3200 C53F 326 (E362 NEG) from Rover of Bromsgrove and, from Welwyn-Hatfield Line come Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton Beaver B31F 433/4 (K3, 4 SBC), Leyland National 11531A/1R/B49F 664 (VKE 564S) and 709D/Reeve Burgess B23F 901/2/4-B/10 (G901 UPP etc) and Plaxton Beaver B23F-bodied 992/3 (K392/3 SLB).

Welwyn-Hatfield Line ceased at the end of January with all vehicles (above) reallocated to the parent company. The Shires is to acquire several local services (with the likelihood of several Leyland Lynx and possibly Mercedes-Benz 811Ds moving also). Sovereign is to gain the Green Line 796/7 (Cambridge-London) operation, with Plaxton-bodied Volvo coaches from Blazefield fleets (also see above).

Stagecoach Manchester ST

Transferred in from East Midland are Volvo B6-50/Alexander Dash B40F 311/2/7-20 (M461/2/57-60 VHE).

For driver training come Leyland Leopard PSU3F/5R/Duple C53F TV4 (PSC 521Y) from Hearson of Cherterton and Plaxton C53F-bodied TV6 (ETC 310W) from Miller of Calderbank. PSU3F/4R/Plaxton C53F LIB 1182 (GBO 245W) is now numbered TV5. These Leopards have ousted Bedford YMT/Plaxton trainers TV1, TV2 (EYP 30V, AAA 428V) and Duple-bodied YMT trainer TV3 (CDT 322T).

Further withdrawals are of accident-damaged MCW Metrorider 1656 (D656 NNE) and Dodge S56s 1772/92 (D772 RBU, E792 SJA), 1898 (D898 MDB) and 1962/3/99 (E962/3 PJA, E999 SJA).

Stagecoach South Group ST

Further new Volvo Olympian YN2RC16V3/Alexander DPH47/28F received are 349/52/7-9 (N349 MPN etc), for Sussex Coastline at Worthing (349), Stagecoach (South) at Aldershot (352) and South Coast Buses (357-9) at Eastbourne.

Another Leyland Titan received is TLNXB2RR/Leyland H44/24D 7261 (KYV 361X), received in repainted/single-door format by Sussex Coastline. Sussex Coastline Titans 7220/61 (KYV 420, 361X) are now single-door H44/24F and South Coast Buses 7244 (EYE 244V) is H44/26F similarly. 7220 now has a three-track numeral display above destination, 7290 (CUL 190V) a complete box removed from a Dennis Dart and is also still in LT red.

Transfers are of Leyland Nationals 102/3/74 (AYJ 102/3T, YCD 74T) to Hampshire Bus from South Coast Buses, Volvo B10M-55s 615/25/7 (M615 APN, L625/7 TDY) also to HB but from Sussex Coastline Buses and Leyland National 1236 (KPA 387P) to Hants & Surrey from Sussex Coastline.

Withdrawn for disposal are Sussex Coastline Iveco 49.10s 488-92 (G418-22 RYJ); Hampshire Bus Leyland Leopard 1017 (UNM 852Y) and Hants & Surrey Ivecos 485/94 (F695 OPA, G864 BPD).

Sales are of 141 (CPO 99W), 729 (WKO 129S), 7370/91 (AAP 670T, VPR 490S) to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer); 696 (EAP 996V), 7607/11 (UWV 607/11S) to Stagecoach, Perth; 1004 (BYJ 819Y), 1160-6 (M160-6 CCD) to Western Scottish; 1101/7 (M101/7 CCD) to Devon General; 2904/7 (F564 HPP, F438 CJK) to Fleetmaster Bus & Coach, Horsham (dealer); 7604/14 (UWV 604/14S) to Stagecoach West.

Guide Friday-liveried VRT convertible 7623 (UWV 623S) was used to convey its roof (still in Stagecoach colours) to Hastings in February; the reason for this is that the equipment to convert such vehicles to open-top or back to closed-top has now been moved from its longstanding home at Worthing, to Hastings. Titan Leisurelinek PD3 422 was re-roofed at Worthing for the last time on 13 February, marking the end of over 20 years of such activity with these smart open-toppers, once 30 in number. Vintage Leylands 0135 (CD 7045) and 0813 (UF 4813) have also departed Worthing and reside at the Chalk Pits Museum at Amberley most agreeably. It is thought that this move is only temporary, whilst building work is undertaken at Worthing.

Stevensons, Uttoxeter BB

Now in stock from Frontline are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH/Plaxton C53F 40 (YSU 953, A618 ATV), 41 (YSU 954, A622 ATV); Leyland Leopard PSU5C/4R/Plaxton C57F 42 (OKY 822X), PSU3E/4R/Willowbrook C53F 115 (YYJ 955, XBF 60S), PSU3E/4R/Willowbrook (1992) Warrior B48F 117 (904 AXY, VRM 620S, DSK 660, VRM 620S), PSU3E/4R/Plaxton C53F 121 (JUB 531V), C49F 122 (KUB 671V), C53F 123 (BJT 322T); Mercedes-Benz 608D/Dormobile 131/2 (D534/8 FAE); Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B49F 268-72 (MHJ 722/5/7V, STW 18, 20W) and Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R/Roe H43/32F 101 (PUA 315W).

From Midland Red North have come Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R/Duple C57F 1615 (A215 PEV) and similar TRCTL11/3R/Duple C53F 1654 (TDC 854X). 1615 was new to Southend and downgraded with bus seating prior to use at Spath. Note that it retains its MRN fleetnumbers, albeit now applied in standard Stevensons black numerals. Further Tigers from other British Bus companies are expected.

Leyland Leopard 116 (YSF 93S) has been withdrawn and sold to PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Leyland Tiger 46 (B150 ALG) is now in red, white and yellow, the new standard coach scheme, but with Ivanhoe Express names on front and Stevensons Coaches on each side. 118 (A41 SMA) is now in yellow with red skirt, 1615 similarly but with the addition of traditional Rising Sun emblems. MCW Metrobus 55 (KJW 310W) now has red roof and skirt with Rising Sun emblems. 80 (TOJ 592S) now has a solid upper saloon emergency exit.

The ex-Northumbria Bristol LH6L/ECW trainer NGR 681P is now based at Swadlincote and still carries Northumbria livery.

Streamline Buses, Bath

New are DAF SB220/llkarus B47F N29-32, 34 FWM, in use on service 418 (Bath Station-University).

Stuarts, Dukinfield

New are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer 132-4 (N132-4 XND), often employed on the Stockport Park & Ride service 304.

Swindon & District ST

Fourteen new bus-seated Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander are due at the end of the year.

TMS NX

Bristol LH6Ls 1949/53/68 (VDV 124S, REU 316S, YAE 512V) are reinstated to Stockton from reserve, whilst further Leyland Nationals into stock are B52F 3667 (KHT 118P) and B49F 3668 (PUK 630R), both DAF-engined and from West Midlands stock.

Bristol LHs 1946/7/54/9/67 (VDV 104/5S, REU 317/30S, WAE 295T) have been placed in reserve.

Thamesdown Transport

The eight Dennis Dart SLFs on order will have Plaxton Pointer B41F bodywork and are due for December delivery. Meanwhile, newly into service on 1 March were Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B40F 125-8 (N125-8 LMW), as a result of which Dodge S56s 404-7 (E404-7 YMR) were withdrawn.

Disposals are of Dennis Lancets 4, 5 (GTP 97, 95X) to Andy James Travel of Tetbury; Dodge S56s 401/3 (D401 TMW, E403 WAM) to Somerbus, Paulton and 402 (E402 WAM) to Shire Coaches of St Albans, 411 (E576 ANE) has gone to Matthews Travel of the Wirral and 499 (E206 GPV) to Banga of Wolverhampton. Daimler Fleetline 388 (YNA 388M) has gone to Prudhoe Community High School, Newcastle as an exhibition unit. Lancet 6 (GTP 96X) and Renault-Dodge S75 475 (F75 AKB) await sale.

Thames Transit TR

New are Dennis Dart 9.8SDL3054/Plaxton B40F 3051-61 (N51-61 KBW).

Transfers in are, from Bayline, Ford Transit/Mellor B16F 102 (D102 PTT), 651/3 (D651/3 NOD) and, from Devon General, Carlyle B16F-bodied 7 (A927 MDV), the latter as a preservation piece.

Ford Transit 103 (D103 PTT) and Iveco 59.12 2000 (K701 UTT) have not previously been recorded withdrawn (2000 transferred to Blue Admiral last year after a period on loan).

Further route-branding has seen 109/23/9/33/8 branded for the Woodman service, 122/4/6/37/9 for the Marston Pony, new 3051-61 for Witney Weavers, but 3035 has now lost its dedication to the Witney-Oxford service.

Thamesway FB

Dennis Dart 938 is a new overall advertisement for Jubilee Windows.

Thompson, Kimberworth

Leyland Leopard/Plaxton C48F JNJ 31V is now in stock and has since been upseated to C49F, but Leopard XTB 749N has been broken up for spares.

Leyland Tiger A211 DPB is now re-registered LIL 8050.

Timeline, Leigh

New are Volvo B10L/Alexander (Belfast) Ultra B43F 302-6 (N302-6 WNF). Volvo B6LE/Wright B36F demonstrators M918/9 MRW and B10L/Alexander (Belfast) B43F M394 MRW have been on loan, the latter numbered 309. Demonstrators M10 ULF and M876 MRW returned to Volvo upon receipt of 304-6, but M10 ULF came back once more to cover for Volvos returning for modification.

Mercedes-Benz 811D 117 (G737 NNS), Leyland Tigers 699, 700/3 (F699 UNE etc) and Van Hool T815 integral H891 JBU have been withdrawn, the Tigers passing to Fylde (qv) and the T815 to Capital Coaches of West Drayton.

Trent Buses

Leyland Nationals 539/40/59/63 (CWX 660/1T, UHW 101T, NOE 585R) are back in service, 559 repainted in Trent Buses livery, whilst 443-6/57-60/99 (PRR 443-6/57-60R, XAL 499S) are now transferred to the Barton fleet with Trent fleetnames replaced by Barton ones.

Leyland National 552 (PHW 987S) is now fitted with a DAF engine and is allocated to Derby, where all other DAF-engined Leyland Nationals are based. Sisters 440/70 (PRR 440R, URB 470S) are now under cannibalisation as is un-numbered/unused DRU 7T. DAF/Optare Delta 323 (J323 BVO) has had to be returned to Optare for repairs after sustaining severe damage when struck by a lorry.

Withdrawals are of Leyland Leopards 1564/9 (KAU 564V, LNU 569W), 1607 (VRC 607Y) and Leyland National 427 (GNU 574N); 1607 had been gutted by fire.

Leyland Leopards 1538/43/6 (FTO 538V etc) and trainer T3 (formerly 1469 (MNU 469P)) have passed to Doherty (dealer), the cannibalised remains of Leyland National 480 (VCH 480S) and un-numbered/unused NEL 122P passing to Spondon of Derby (dealer) for scrap.

Group Chief Engineer John Ashmore has kindly added this month that this year will see the withdrawal of all remaining ex-Barton Leyland Leopards and, quite possibly, remaining Trent Buses Leopards and also Leyland Atlanteans.

Truronian, Truro

New arrivals are four Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B37F as N166-9 KAF and a Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver as N170 KAF.

Universitybus, Hatfield

New Dennis Dart N423 ENM has Marshall B40F, as does N421 ENM.

Viscount Bus & Coach ST

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 200-4 (N614/5/7/9/41 VSS) reported last month were originally intended for Western Scottish.

Withdrawals are of West Midlands MCW Metroriders WM1, 2, 7, 9, 10/3/5/6 (E664 SVP, D642/7/5 NOE, E657 SVP, D642/03/40/04 NOE), which have returned there off-loan. Two remained in March (WM12, 17).

Group codes	
BB	British Bus
BL	Blazefield Holdings
CW	EWMS Group
EY	Cowm Group
FB	First Bus
GA	Go-Ahead Group
MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction



The first Metroriders in service in Bristol are two MCWs bought from Cardiff by Silver Wing for a contract for a service to Sea Mills, where E140 SNY is seen. ALLAN MACFARLANE

Warrington Borough Transport

Further ex-Blackburn Leyland Atlanteans in stock are AN68A/1R/East Lancs H45/31F 117 (CFV 119S) and H43/31F 118/9 (LFR 125/8T).

Minibuses and midibuses have been repainted at the brisk rate of two per week into red and white fleet livery (ex-blue/yellow and two-tone blue/yellow respectively), latest treated being Dodge S56 203 and Dennis Darts 208/167/214/7. The two-tone blue/yellow livery (or blue/yellow on minis) is being phased out on buses, to present a uniform and identifiable livery.

The coach fleet has been slimmed down considerably to just three vehicles, Volvo B10M/Van Hool Alizée C1-C3 (G100 TDJ, J414/0 AWF), all retaining blue/yellow. Withdrawn are similar C2, C4, C5 and C9 (CIW 7633, D614 MVR, WBT 851, G758 ELV), Van Hool T815 integrals C3, C6 and C7 (E256 MMM, H6, 7 CLW), Plaxton-bodied B10M C8 (C108 AFX) and Plaxton 4000-bodied B10MT double-deckers C10 and C12 (F707 COA, E777 VDA). Of these withdrawn, only C8 saw use this year.

Coach-seated Dennis Dominators 121/2 (F121/2 XEM) and Leyland Titan PD2/40/East Lancs promotional vehicle AED 31B retain Coachlines colours at present. Rare 7ft 6in-wide 1965 PD2/40 Special/East Lancs 148 (BED 729C) is occasionally used still, in particular on private hire and schools work. In answer to query, the latter is correctly of designation PD2/40 Special and not PD2/41, as has been quoted variously elsewhere.

Waylands, Stockton

A second former Delaine/London Country Leyland Tiger/Duple in stock is YPD 106Y, joining former stablemate YPD 132Y here.

Welwyn-Hatfield Line BL

This company's operators' licence was surrendered in January, all vehicles being transferred to parent company Sovereign (qv).

Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services

The Essex Bus Enthusiasts Club highlights that just eight ex-Westcliff vehicles are known to survive — AEC Q JN 5783 (as a chassis only at the Science Museum), Bristol K5G AJN 825, Daimler CWA6 FOP 429, Leyland PD1/1 LEV 917, Bristol KSW5Gs VNO 868 and open-toppers WNO 478/9 and Bristol LS coach EJN 638.

KSW5Gs FJN 156 and UVX 666 were exported to the United States as was all-Leyland PD2 FJN 206 — can any reader identify if these still exist please?

Your columnist can add one further vehicle to this list — 1938 AEC Regal 0662 AHJ 404 survives, albeit in much rebuilt and totally unrecognisable form with Schembri B36F body as Malta's Y-0799, one of the select handful of prewar chassis still to see service in 1996 there. With typical Maltese-style bodywork, Bedford front grille and AEC 505 engine, one could be forgiven for missing it!

Western National FB

Orders now call for 14 Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer DP35F and two Volvo B10M/Van Hool Expressliners.

Acquisitions are Mercedes-Benz L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F 177 (C377 RUY) from Midland Red West; Leyland Lynx/B51F 206 (G261 LUG) from Brewers; Toyota Coaster/Caetano C21F 579 (G271 VPX) from DAC Coaches of Callington; and Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton 3200 C53F 2211/2 (WSV 408/9) and Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4R/Plaxton DP49F 3510 (KUB 548V) from Yorkshire Rider and Tiger TRCTL11/3RH/Plaxton 3200 C51F 2215/6 (B291/5 KPF). Leopard driver trainer 9502 (MHS 25P) has joined the fleet additionally, from Thamesway.

Now re-registered are Tiger/Plaxton 2203 (A749 VAF) to TLJ 372, 2210 (A210 SAE) to VPM 642; B10M/Plaxton 2247 (F444 DUG) to HFN 769, 2248 (F446 DUG) to FNJ 905, 2252 (F445 DUG) to TJU 761 and 2253 (G541 LWU) to WNN 734.

All Mercedes-Benz 709Ds and 811Ds are now outshopped in latest livery, a fair few L608Ds also now treated. Once the balance of Bristol VRT/SL3 stock is dealt with, the whole fleet should be in one standard livery for the first time since National Bus Company days. Former Grenville Leopards 2453 and 3544 (CPT 823S, FDV 800V) are both now in fleet livery.

Now withdrawn are Mercedes-Benz L608D 40 (C201 PCD), Leopards 3530/5 (FDV 821/6V), Ford Transits 557/73 (C159 DWT, B476 YEU), 709Ds 626/7 (H825 ERV, J901 MAF), Freight Rover Sherpa 7009 (D954 NOJ), Bedford YMT 7027 (JKV 423V), Bedford 7032 (MUY 59X), DAF 7042 (D617 YCX) and LAG integral 7043 (F767 XNH) have all been sold. 626/7 are now with Brewers, 7043 with Grampian. Leopards 3417 and 3535 (PDD 101M, FDV 826V) were reported withdrawn in February, but were noted in service by correspondent Paul Crate in St Austell on 1 March.

West Midlands Travel NX

Further new Volvo B10B/Wright B48F are 1344-51 (N344-50 WOH, N151 WOV).

Transferred in from Smiths, Shennington, stock are MCW Metrorider/B23F 643/67 (D643 NOE, F667 YOG) and from County Bus comes Iveco 49.10/Reeve Burgess B23F 7445 (E445 TYG).

There are many withdrawals to record again this month, comprising Dodge S56s 472 (D472 UHC), 565/76 (D565/76 NDA); Iveco 49.10s 587 (D587 NDA), 7513 (E513 TOV), 9040/6 (D40 DNH, D46 KAX), 9115 (D115 DRV); MCW Metrorider 612 (D612 NOE); Leyland Atlantean 698 (CWG 698V); Leyland National 2s 1034/41/6 (DOC 34, 41, 46V); Leyland Nationals 1468/73/86/8/98 (ROK 468/73M, TOE 486/8/98N), 1545/87 (NOE 545R, JNA 587N), 1707 (JOX 507P), 1814 (OOX 814R), 1904 (THX 267S); MCW Metrobus 2028 (BOK 28V); Volvo Ailsa B55-10 4773 (JOV 773P); Leyland Fleetlines 6585 (NOC 585R), 6676/83/4 (WDA 676T etc), 6751/8/88 (SDA 751S etc), 6909/29/63/95 (WDA 909T etc).

576 has been transferred to County Bus; 1034/41, 1473, 1545, 1707 and 1814 are now with Pride of the Road, Huddersfield; 1468/86/8/98 are now with Bee Line; 4773 has joined several sisters in the Black Prince fleet and 7513 has gone to Concept of Burntwood for use on a relief aid project in Russia. Barnsley dealers have taken 472, 565/87, 612/98, 1046, 1587, 6585, 6751/8/88, 6929/63, 9040/6 and 9115 all for scrap; 1904 has gone to Wacton of Bromyard (dealer), 6676/83/4 and 6995 to Purchase of Coventry (dealer).

Wilfreda-Beehive, Adwick-le-Street

Plain all-over white liveried Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer N599 DWY has been in use, with 'on-hire' labelling.

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Those keen to learn more in detail about Channel Islands operators, past and present, are recommended to the Channel Islands Bus Society's quarterly illustrated newsletter/magazine, as this has space to give chassis numbers, body numbers, Police plate numbers, route developments, minor coach operator details and historical items that space would not permit within these pages. Items of rail/tram interest are also covered, as are detailed features on a range of topics.

For details of Channel Islands Bus Society (annual subscription £7.50), please send an SAE to Dr J. R. Young, Flat 2c, The Nottingham Trent University, Clifton, Nottingham NG11 8NS.

Guernsey

Guernseybus

Dr Young kindly advises that the Leyland Titan RTL 19 (995, KY 647) has already been making itself useful as early as March this year on coastal service K, attracting passengers by virtue of being double-deck and being efficient to operate off-season, through being OPO.

Following the successful introduction of this extraordinary forward-entrance conversion, work is now well under way on an AEC Regent III RT, to be numbered 20.

Former Tantivy Bristol LH6L/Plaxton 172 (31922) has been withdrawn following accident damage.

Bristol LHS6L/ECW 82 (31920) was re-registered 25701 last year.

Watson's Greys

The first of the postwar vehicles of this delightful fleet, 1949 Albion Victor FT3AB/Reading FB36F 732 has now sadly been lost from preservation. New with petrol engine, it was the first diesel-engined vehicle on Guernsey after conversion. In all-over red with navy blue flash (still retaining its Guernsey Railway 22 fleetnumbers and 'buckle'), it is now with New Age travellers. Grateful thanks to correspondent Sholto Thomas for this interesting, but rather sad news item.

Does any reader know the current location of later sister 1787, latterly back on Guernsey with Island Coachways and latterly with the Holker Hall Museum in Cumbria?

Jersey

Pioneer Coaches

Ex-Silverline Leyland Swift LBM6T/2RS/Wadham Stringer Vanguard 2 C39F E163 OMD is in stock, re-registered J 14674.

Good news indeed is that the company's AEC Regent III RT4045 is has been moved from open-storage under cover, prior to restoration work.

ISLE OF MAN

Isle of Man Transport

The ex-Metrobus Leyland Olympians, 81 and 82 (XWX 475/6X) are due to have replaced Leyland Nationals 18 and 20 and are expected to receive registrations DMN 81, 82H.

Current whereabouts of sold stock are that Leyland National formerly 14 (MAN 14A) is now with Pilkington of Accrington as CNB 432M; 15 (MAN 15D) is with Globe of Barnsley as JBN 947N; 16 (MAN 16D) and 82 (2219 MAN, NFN 67M) are now with Pride of the Road, Royston, re-registered JBN 950N and CNB 430M respectively. 19 (MAN 19D, NFN 62M) is with Dennis's of Ashton-under-Lyne, back to its original registration, whilst accompanying it is 17 (MAN 17D), now re-registered JBN 948N. 1 (2749 MAN) is with Huxley of Threapwood as JDT 433N again, 9 (2444 MAN) with Angloblue, Leeds as JWG 194P, 10 (2704 MAN) with Ludlows of Halesowen as KCR 108P. 4, 12 and 78 (2443, 4294, 3812 MAN) are all with O. R. Jones of Llanfaethlu, Anglesey, as JWG 193P, KSO 74P and JDT 436N respectively.

5, 77 and 80 (3176 MAN, 4648/7 MAN) have been transformed into Volvo-engined National Greenway/East Lancs rebuilds for Blackburn Transport as 527/9/8 as LRN 552N (JDT 437M), JWG 191P and JDT 432N respectively. Bristol RELH6L/Plaxton Elite C51F 40 WMN is still with Sergeants of Kingston, Herefordshire, re-registered SGF 483L.

Something of a departure for United Counties is the use of ex-West Midlands Travel Fleetlines; 992 (SDA 7155) is seen in Kettering. JOHN YOUNG



Tours (Isle of Man)

Current fleet at the turn of the year comprised:

DAF SB230S/Plaxton 320 C51Ft 1 (111 PMN, E654 KCX)
 Bedford YNV/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F 2 (F111 MAN, C155 UDD)
 Bedford YNV/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F 3 (HMN 111, C156 UDD)
 Bedford YNT/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C51Ft 4 (MAN 111D, GIL 252B, WWE 130Y)
 Bedford YMT/Plaxton Supreme IV C53F 5 (M111 MAN, SMA 320V)
 Bedford YMT/Duple Dominant II C53F 6 (MAN 111M, OFV 289T)
 Bedford YRT/Plaxton Elite III C53F 7 (O111 MAN, KCW 884N)
 Bedford YMT/Duple Dominant II C53F 8 (111 XMN, XYK 744T)
 DAF SB230S/Duple 320 C53Ft 11 (MAN 111H, G28 TEC)
 DAF SB230S/Duple 320 C53Ft 12 (MAN 111Y, G901 MCX)
 Mercedes-Benz L508D/Reeve Burgess C19F 19 (MAN 111L, 7622 UK, BHG 101Y)
 Bedford VAS5/Duple Dominant C29F 27 (2563 MN)
 Bedford VAS5/Duple Dominant I C29F 28 (BMN 111A, DLA 924T)
 Bedford VAS5/Duple Dominant IV C29F 29 (MAN 111B, FIL 8616)
 Bedford YRQ/Duple Dominant C45F 45 (1935 MAN)
 Bedford YRQ/Duple Dominant C45F 46 (4777 MAN)
 DAF MB200/Van Hool Alizée C50Ft 50 (PMN 111, B179 UNW)
 Bedford YNT/Plaxton Supreme VI C53F 51 (MAN 111J, NWG 989X)
 Bedford YNT/Duple Dominant IV C53F 52 (H111 MAN, DNK 106Y)
 Bedford YNT/Plaxton Supreme V C57F 57 (T111 MAN, MJL 799Y)
 Bedford OB/Duple Vista C29F 1949 (1949 MN, HTM 20)
 Bedford OB/Duple Vista C29F 1950 (1950 MN, RHK 843)

A two-tone blue livery is carried, applied in a slightly different style to each vehicle. A fleet renumbering is expected prior to the main season this year.

Thanks go to reader Graham Radcliffe for kindly detailing the IoM notes above.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Particular thanks are due, this month, to the following for your most welcome contributions to Fleet News:

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Readers wishing to contact the British Trolleybus Society should note the revised address for subscriptions: The Secretary, Andrew Barton, 2 Josephine Court, Southcote Road, Reading RG30 2DG.

Group codes

BB — British Bus
 BL — Blazefield Holdings
 CW — Cowie Group
 EY — EYMS Group
 FB — First Bus
 GA — Go-Ahead Group
 MT — MTL Holdings
 NX — National Express
 ST — Stagecoach Holdings
 TR — Transit Holdings
 YT — Yorkshire Traction

Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Darts are now in service with a number of independent operators; This one, N7EJS, is for E. Jones & Sons of Wrexham.
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The following are now available from LOTS:

London Bus Magazine - issue number 96 of this enlarged quarterly fully illustrated glossy magazine is now available and includes the usual 'Around & About' update as well as major articles featuring Victoria Coach Station, LT Destination Blinds and Clapham Junction. Order your copy now, £4.00 (£3.00 to members)

Buses of London Fleetbook 1996 £4.50 (£4.00 to members)

The new 1996 edition of this popular title, up-to-date to March, includes all the operators in London and the home counties - almost 9000 vehicles!

SUP38A - London Area Registration Number Index

£3.00 (£2.00 to members). A new publication, which lists the registration number, in alpha-numeric order, together with their fleet number, of every vehicle is to be found in Fleetbook 1996.

For more details of the benefits of becoming a LOTS member, please send a large SAE to the Membership Secretary,

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Advance Notice:

Autumn Transport Spectacular

Date: 2nd November 1996

Location: Picketts Lock

Reports to be sent to Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow G41 4AF, to reach him by 12 July for the September issue.

A1 Service ST

283/9 (F53/4 RFS) are B25F MCW Metrorider MF150s added to this fleet in April, having previously been Cheltenham & Gloucester 601/2.

Leyland Titan 948 and MCW Metroriders 283/5/7 have now had the red A1 Service fleetnames applied.

AA Buses, Ayr

Two new Caetano-bodied Dennis Javelins have been purchased for use on North British Tours work, and carry a revised purple and yellow livery for that company. One is N594 GBW but further details are awaited of these vehicles, together with new Van Hool-bodied Scania coach N7 DOT which is in fleet livery for Dodds Coaches.

Another two coaches which were re-registered in June last year are Van Hool-bodied Volvos E312/4 OPR, now TJL 5391/2 respectively.

Aitken, North Locheynort

This South Uist operator is now providing services in various parts of the island including North Glendale, South Lochboisdale and Locheynort, some of which extend to Balivanich on Benbecula.

Allander, Milngavie

Further to last month's issue, it now appears that the Van Hool-bodied Volvo coach purchased from Park, Hamilton and numbered CLO2 was L635 AYS (*LSK 844*) and not L645 AYS (*HSK 645*). Another identical vehicle bought from the same source is L634 AYS (*LSK 839*) although it is not in Citylink colours.

Also with reference to last month's issue, all three of the Duple B55F-bodied Volvo B10M-61s D375-7 RHS have been sold to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis together with East Lancs B53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R BSG 551W.

Ashton, Port Glasgow

The revised operation on service 585 Coastline between Ayr and Greenock which commenced at the beginning of April is to be run by all four partners (AA/Ashton/Clydeside/Western Scottish) under that name and using the white and green livery which this company uses.

Two more new services registered by this company to commence on 28 May comprise Port Glasgow to Glasgow (West Regent Street) via Bishopton, Erskine and Renfrew; and Paisley (Nethercraigs) to Glasgow (Gordon Street) via Renfrew. Both are to operate during the day on Mondays to Saturdays and compete directly with Clydeside services.

New arrivals in late-April comprised N752/3 LUS, Mercedes-Benz 709Ds with UVG Citi-Star B29F bodywork and N754 LUS, N228 MUS which are similar but with Marshall B29F bodywork.

Talbot Pullmans K731/2 AOG were last owned by Bridge Trafford and not Patterson, Birmingham.

Bluebird Buses ST

Plaxton C53Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 556 (E605 CHS, *DJU 704*, *E898 CGA*, *174 NJO*, *E408 MSX*) was acquired from Rowe, Muirkirk in February apparently via Western Scottish, although there are no reports from that company to confirm this or give any reason for its acquisition. It was allocated to Elgin depot when purchased, and in April it was re-registered MIB 7416.

As previously reported, the business of Gray, Fochabers was acquired on 9 April. Three vehicles are being kept at Gray's depot in Fochabers for use on school contracts but the full list of vehicles involved in the transaction comprised Duple C57F-bodied Bedford YNV 218 (B90 CDS); Duple C49F-bodied Ford R1114 225 (PUF 249M); Duple C53F-bodied Bedford YMT 226 (ESE 253T); Caetano C21F-bodied Toyota HDB30R 229 (J254 MFP); PMT C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814D 300 (H889 NFS); Duple C53F-bodied Dennis Javelin 11SDA 526 (F358 MUT); Plaxton C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 557 (F424 GGB); Duple C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 558 (FHS 740X); and Reeve Burgess 12-seat-bodied Mercedes-Benz L307D 722 (A181 OST).

Of these, 225/6/9 were not used with 225/6 being sold on to Mayne, Buckie and 229 to Midland, Auchterarder. 722 is in non-PSV use at Inverness, replacing Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 720 (C901 HWF) which has reverted to fleetnumber 241 and the PSV fleet.

Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger 456 has been given Loch Ness Tour promotional livery while Alexander-bodied Dennis Dart 504 is now a mainly blue overall advertisement for Inverness and Nairn Enterprise.

Half-hourly open top bus tours of Perth are to be operated between 29 June and the end of September, with support from Scottish Enterprise Tayside. The route includes the Fair Maid's House, Scone Palace, Kinnoull Hill and the South Inch.

Bruce, Shotts

New Van Hool-bodied Volvos N549/50 NYS are in Londonliner livery while similar L82/3 XDS have lost their Londonliner colours in favour of allover white.

Bryce, Coatbridge

E453/6 TYG are a pair of Iveco 49.10s with Robin Hood B23F bodywork which have been purchased from HAD Coaches, Shotts.

Citylink NX

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-46 JAZ 9854 of Highland Country is now in Citylink colours.

Clan, Kyle

A most interesting purchase by this company is M925 TYG, an Optare Prisma B49F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.405 previously used by the coachbuilder as a demonstrator. It had been repainted into full fleet livery by early May, and it was anticipated that it would be used on new services linking Portree, Kyleakin and Armadale due to commence later that month. It has also been reported that one or two new examples of the same type are on order.

Clyde Coast, Ardrossan

N936 RBC is the third Volvo B10M-62 with Jonckheere C49Ft coachwork, and was new in March. Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D F197 ASD (*341 AYF*, *F648 FGE*) has been sold to Western Scottish.

Clydeside BB

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard TSJ 87S and ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians C214 UPD, C449 BKM have entered service with fleet numbers 787 and 893/9 respectively. It has been suggested that some of the Leyland Olympians may not be retained by this company — C452/3 GKE have been reported with Selby & District at the end of March.

Mercedes-Benz 711Ds 257/8/60, Renault S56 339, Volvo B6-50s 443/4 and Leyland Leopards 638, 718/69 are now in the current livery style, the Volvos having previously been in Paisley Park & Ride colours.

Co Chomunn, Carnan

Community bus operator Co Chomunn an Iochdar Ltd of Carnan on South Uist is now operating an improved service between Ardivachar on that island and Balivanich on Benbecula, providing up to four return journeys on schooldays only.

Collison, Stonehouse

N5 BUS, a new Marshall B33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D, has been purchased for use on this company's local service work and has replaced J916 HGD, a Talbot Pullman with B23F bodywork.

Crawford, Neilston

N134 HSD is a Van Hool C36Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-48 while N276/7 HSD are Volvo B10M-62s with Van Hool C53Ft and C57F coachwork respectively. All were new in April.

Cumbrae, Millport

M831 RCP is a recently acquired DAF SB220 with Ikarus B49F bodywork, now in full fleet livery albeit with black rather than cream window surrounds. Although it came from dealer Hughes DAF, it had latterly been in the fleet of Delta, Kirkby in Ashfield.

Davidson, Bathgate

Previously based in Whitburn, this company is now operating a number of services in the Bathgate area including evenings and Sundays 37/37A (Edinburgh and Ratho), Sundays 186 (Armadale and Whitburn), hourly Mondays to Saturdays 283 (Livingston and Fauldhouse), Sunday evenings 390 (Bathgate and Fauldhouse), and Sunday evenings 396 (Bathgate and Boghall).

Ferguson, Lochmaddy

Alastair Ferguson, trading as Alda's Minibuses, is now operating a circular service on North Uist linking Lochmaddy, Sollas, Bayhead and Carinish with up to three journeys per day on Mondays to Fridays.

Galson, Barvas

Services operated by this company now include Stornoway and Newmarket on Mondays to Saturdays, and Stornoway to Dalmore/Shawbost circular on Mondays to Fridays.

GCT SB

Ex-Allander Travel Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-50s M870/1 DYS entered service at the beginning of May in full fleet livery and carrying new numbering system fleetnumbers MV27/8 on the front panel only. They are allocated to Larkfield depot for use on service M10. Optare MetroRider GM63 and MCW Metrorider GM70 are now in fleet livery.

Glen, Port Glasgow

L628 AYS (*LSK 487*) is a Volvo B10M-62 with Van Hool C53F coachwork previously owned by Park, Hamilton purchased in March, replacing similar E308 OPR which went to Moseley (dealer), Glenmavis at that time.

Grampian Transport FB

Another 10 Mercedes-Benz O.405s with Optare Prisma B47F bodywork are due for delivery next February.

Leyland Atlantean 332 had its additional Brunswick green and gold stripes above the lower saloon windows removed before it entered service. Conversely, Leyland Olympian 128 has had this feature included in the application of its new livery, but similar 125-7/9/30 are also in the new colours without these stripes. Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 437/9 have had their Beaver Bus lettering removed and replaced by large Grampian fleetnames. Volvo coach 94 has now had Scotland Against Drugs lettering added to its overall blue livery and toured Scotland during May as part of the cross-party campaign against drug abuse.

Veteran Alexander O43/34F-bodied Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1 24 (GRS 114E) was withdrawn last September and was sold in May to MacEwan, Amisfield for further use. Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R 264 (HRS 264V) has been broken up for spares. The remains of Leyland Atlanteans 239/40 (DSA 239/40T) were sold to Porter (dealer), Whitecarns; similar 237/8/41/3 (YSO 237T, DSA 238/41/3T) were transferred to the Midland Bluebird fleet; and 236/48/57 (YSO 236T, DSA 248/57T) passed initially to SMT.

From 12 May services 1-4 were converted to Gold Service standard using the recent delivery of Optare Prismas 525-39 and some of the upgraded Leyland Olympians in the 122-31 batch. Service 2 was extended from Scotstown to a new housing estate at Ashwood as part of the exercise. Service 5 (Balnagask-Scotstown) was also extended, to Dubford.

Grenitote, Sollas

Grenitote Travel, of Sollas in North Uist, has won the Western Isles contract to provide an improved service on that island, linking Balivanich and Otternish or Sollas via Carinish and Lochmaddy. This service operates throughout the day on Mondays to Saturdays and includes connections at Newton Jetty for the island of Berneray.

HAD Coaches, Shotts

L632 AYS (*LSK 830*) is a Volvo B10M-62 with Van Hool C53F coachwork purchased from Park, Hamilton. Robin Hood-bodied Iveco 49.10s E453/6 TYG are now with Bryce, Coatbridge.

Hall, Kennoway

MCW open top-bodied Leyland Atlantean FKM 706L and Dormobile-bodied Ford Transit B764 DEG were sold in March.

Harris, Tarbert

This company has retained its previous route between Stornoway and Tarbert or Leverburgh in the Western Isles service revisions, albeit with an improvement in frequency.

Henderson, Hamilton

New Mercedes-Benz N210 ESF is a 711D (not a 709D) and has Alexander (Belfast) B29F bodywork.

Highland Country NX

With reference to previous issues, it has now been confirmed that the former Martin, Spean Bridge Van Hool C38Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-46 acquired with that business in January was not LGL 722 (*2367 AT*, *E194 YGG*) but E998 CGA (*4143 AT*, *E477 WUS*).

Ikarus-bodied DAF saloon J411 NCP has been allocated fleetnumber J411 for the duration of its loan for the summer, although it does not carry it. It remains in white but with Highland Country fleetnames added. Leyland Fleetline D76 (BVR 76T) is now listed by the company as D376 although it still carries D76. Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennine S102 (JSF 904T) had been reinstated for further service by April.

Volvo coach V998 has been repainted into Citylink livery. More repaints into the new blue, grey and red fleet livery include Mercedes-Benz 811D P5; Leyland Leopards L109, 224, 814; Volvo B58-61 V116; Leyland Fleetlines D313/26/7, 591; and Bristol VR D644.

Several vehicles were re-registered around March comprising Van Hool-bodied Volvo V271 (MBS 271W, *TRM 144*, *TGD 767W*) to JAZ 9851; Plaxton-bodied Volvo V474 (USK 474Y, *ESK 986*, *UCV 206Y*, *353 TPF*, *FWT 621Y*) to JAZ 9855; Van Hool-bodied Volvos V816/7 (B216/7 FJS) to JAZ 9852/3; Van Hool-bodied Volvo V883 (A199 PBS, *1983 NT*, *A639 AJS*) to JAZ 9850; and the ex-Martin Van Hool-bodied Volvo V998 (E998 CGA, *4143 AT*, *E477 WUS*) to JAZ 9854.

Naturally the biggest story surrounding the Scottish bus scene in recent weeks is the bid by FirstBus to take over SB Holdings. This however is reported in 'News' this month so we shall say no more about it here.

Well away from the world of the creation of supergroup bus operators controlling large tracts of territory between them, there have also been significant developments in public transport in the Western Isles. As anticipated, at the beginning of April the Western Isles Council implemented a package of subsidised local bus service and school transport improvements estimated to be costing in the region of £2million, and resulting in higher quality facilities from Lewis in the north to Barra in the south.

The aim of the new system has been to integrate the previously separate contracts for school and local bus services, thereby making more efficient use of the resources involved. In so doing, it has been possible to provide public transport for the first time in some areas, to improve frequencies and routes, and to offer better connections with the various ferry services which link the islands. A partial DIPTAC vehicle specification has been included, and a no smoking policy has been adopted on all bus services, while on school transport use of the 'three for two' seating rule has ended and school buses should not now be more than eight years old.

Some details of the changes involved are given below under the relevant operator heading in Scottish Fleet News, and there will no doubt be further details to follow regarding additions to the fleets of the various operators involved.

Hutchison, Overtown

New additions to this fleet in March and April comprise N608/9 OGE, MAN 11.190s with Optare Vecta B42F bodywork; KSK 930, a Volvo B10M-62 with Van Hool C48DLT coachwork; and KSK 933/4, also Van Hool-bodied B10M-62s but C53F. The latter pair are in David Urquhart Travel and Caledonian Travel livery respectively.

With reference to the April issue, Van Hool-bodied Volvo KSK 930 (*D366 RHS*) was re-registered D705 UGA last November, not KSK 929 (*D365 RHS*). Duple-bodied Volvo KSK 933 (*E154 XHS*) was re-registered E648 CHS in March to allow the cherished mark to be used on the new coach.

Van Hool C49F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 H721 YYS is now owned by Silver Fox, Renfrew.

Kelvin Central SB

The latest Alexander PS B49F-bodied Volvo B10M-55s to enter service are 2389-404/6/8 (N89, 190, 91-8, 199/20-4/6/8 OGG). They were initially allocated to Motherwell (2389-98) and Old Kilpatrick (2399-404/6/8).

Vehicles operated by Airdrie depot appear to have been the first in this fleet to carry new fleetnumbers under the long-awaited scheme to integrate the GCT, KCB and SBL numbering systems. Full details of the scheme are not yet available but from the examples noted MCW Metrobuses are classified DM, MCW Metroriders are MM, Leyland Leopards coaches are CL, Leopard saloons are SL, Leyland Nationals are SN, Leyland Tigers are ST, and Volvo B10B/B10Ms are SV. Those reported are Leyland Leopards 1547 and 2580 now SL247 and CL180 respectively; Leyland National 1140 now SN40; Leyland Tigers 1233/44 now ST333/44; MCW Metrobus 1658 now DM158; Volvo B10Bs 1301-10 now SV301-10; and Volvo B10Ms 1392/3, 2379-88 now SV402/9, 479-88. The new numbers are carried on the rear only, and the old fleetnumbers have not been removed.

Vehicles which have been sold to dealers this year, for which new owners have not yet been recorded, include Rootes-bodied Ford Transits 1001/2 (C546 TJF, C556 TUT); Carlyle-bodied Ford Transit 1004 (C194 KBH); Rooin Hood-bodied Iveco 49.10s 1092/5/6 (D408 FRV, D732/3 YBV); Leyland Nationals 1108/12/20/5/9 (HPF 304N, OVV 517R, UPB 295S, DPW 784T, XNG 761S); Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 1458/66/9/75/7-9/83-5/7/9, 1500/3/7/9/21-3/5-7 (EGB 58, 66/9/75, 47-9, 53-5/7, 46T, GSU 840/3/7/9/61-3/5/6/27T); Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobus 1628 (ULS 634X); and Alexander-bodied Ailsa B55-10s 1958/65/70/2/3/5/6/80-2 (LHS 738/45V, YMS 704/7/8/10/1/01/3R, LSX 14P).

Other disposals around the turn of the year comprised Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 1519 (GSU 859T), 2538 (PGA 830V); Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard 2586 (MRP 243V); Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobus 1613 (CKS 393X); and Alexander-bodied Ailsa 1971 (YMS 705R). The first and last of these were taken by Pegasus, Errol and Marbill, Beith respectively.

Kennedy, Orinsay

The contract held by this company for the service between Stornoway and Orinsay expired in early April when the improved services were implemented by Western Isles Council.

Kirkpatrick, Banchory

E406 RWR, a Duple C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 previously Yorkshire Rider 1406, was acquired in April. It is currently being used in overall ivory with a Kirkpatrick of Deeside fleetname in the windscreen.

Lochs, Leurbost

Services operated by this company following the Western Isles changes comprise Stornoway and Balallan or Ranish on Mondays to Saturdays, Stornoway and Melbost on Mondays to Fridays, New Tolsta and Portnaguran (a cross-town service in Stornoway) on Mondays to Saturdays, and a Stornoway circular evening service on Mondays to Saturdays.

Lothian

Last month we referred to the introduction of a Bath tour in the near future. This report has turned out to be erroneous and we apologise to the operator for any embarrassment caused.

Lochview, Greenock

Plaxton-bodied Volvo SJ1 5624 (*7076 LJ, LGB 853V*) was sold to Wilson, Carnwath in March.

Lothian Transit FB

Further to the June issue, this operator's business actually passed to Lowland on 1 April. Full details of the vehicles included in this arrangement are given under Lowland.

Vehicles which had left this fleet prior to April included Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards 1100/93 (HCS 800N, AGM 693L); ECW-bodied Daimler Fleetlines 1103/11/3 (KXS 703/11/3N); Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard 1134 (YSC 132R, VXI 8734, RRS 49R); Rootes B16F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa 1159 (D456 CKV); and Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennine 1189 (GSX 889T).

Lowland FB

The previously reported absorption of the Dalkeith and Musselburgh operations of SMT from 1 April added a large number of vehicles to this fleet comprising Alexander-bodied Ailsa B55-10s BGG 252/4/7S, CSG 773-6/80S, TSJ 593/6-600S; similar Volvo B55-10s HSF 76-8, 80-8, 91-5X, B149-58 GSC; Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1Rs ALS 119Y, A137/42 BSC; Alexander-bodied Volvo Citybuses B169-73 KSC, E187-90 HSF; Alexander-bodied Leyland Tigers PSF 311Y, A12 SMT (*PSF 312Y*), A328/9 BSC, D349-51 ESC; Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers A20 SMT (*A331 BSC*), WSV 136-8 (*B336-8 RLS*); Omni M399 OMS; Alexander-bodied Dodge S56 D420 ASF; Alexander-bodied Renault S56 E458 JSG; Optare MetroRiders J503-9 WSX, K514 BSX, L518-22 KSX; and Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennine 7s LSC 932T, RSX 591V, SSX 595-7, 609/12/3/8-22/5/7-30V, YSG 633-6/40/2/3/5/7/50/5/8/9W. At present, they all continue to carry their SMT fleetnumbers which in some cases duplicate numbers carried by other Lowland vehicles.

Vehicles acquired with the Lothian Transit business on 1 April comprised Leyland National 11351A/1R B52F 158 (158 ASV, *OLS 805T*); Plaxton C49F-bodied Seddon Pennine 7 422 (*PSU 322, LSC 950T*); Duple C55F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3F/5R 1101 (NUD 801W); Alexander B21F-bodied Dodge S56s 1108/10 (D408/10 ASF); Plaxton C50F-bodied Volvo B58-61 1132 (KEX 532, *PBC 453, GOP 730W*); Alexander B25F-bodied Renault S56s 1135/40 (E435/40 JSG); ECW H43/32F-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30AGRs 1151/2/6/772 (OSG 51/2, 67, 72V); Leyland National 11351A/1R-B51F 1161 (BSF 771S); and Wright B33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 1175 (K175 YVC). They had previously carried the same fleetnumbers with Lothian Transit with the exception of 158 and 422 which had been Lothian Transit 1158 and 1122.

Two other vehicles have been acquired recently from Midland Bluebird consisting of Alexander C24DL-bodied Seddon Pennine 7 501 (SSC 108P, *365 UMY, MSJ 371P*) and Duple C44F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH 1115 (VSU 715, *A124 ESG*). Both have been allocated to Dalkeith and are in allover white.

Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger 519 has been repainted into cream-based GRT bus style livery, and ex-Lothian Transit Leyland National 158 is now in the yellow-based GRT style livery.

Duple-bodied DAF coach 626 was re-registered from C700 USC to VXI 8734 around the end of last year. Seddon Pennines 2 and 433 have been resealed from DP49F to B60F and from C45F to C49F respectively.

Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennines 32 (YSG 632W) and 36 (LSC 936T) were transferred to the Midland Bluebird fleet in April together with Reeve Burgess-bodied Renault S75 782 (H502 OSC). Many other vehicles were sold earlier this year to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall comprising Seddon Pennines 53 (VSX 753R), 464 (OSF 964V), 495 (DFS 795S), Leyland Nationals 170 (GSX 870T), 173 (BSF 763S) and un-numbered OLS 815T; Duple-bodied Bedford YLQ 607 (APH 528T); Duple-bodied Bedford YNT 615 (KUX 233W); ECW-bodied Daimler Fleetline 1201 (KXS 667N); and un-numbered ECW-bodied Leyland Fleetlines GSC 853T, OSG 68, 70V.

The contract to operate the Borders Rail Link service 95 between Galashiels and Carlisle on behalf of Borders and Dumfries & Galloway Councils was lost to MacEwan, Amisfield with effect from 2 June, although this company will continue to provide some Saturday journeys without subsidy.

McColl, Dalmuir

In recent times this operator has been recorded as McColl, Balloch but the business address is again being quoted as McColl, Dalmuir. Two additional services registered to commence on 26 April were 8, between Silverton and Brucehill in Dumbarton and 9, between Kent Drive and Cairndhu Avenue in Helensburgh.

N21 KYS is a Mercedes-Benz minibus with TBP bodywork recently added to this fleet, although further details are unknown at present. TFU 63T and WFU 465V are Leyland Fleetline FE30AGRs with Roe H45/29D bodywork acquired in January ex-Grimsby Cleethorpes 63/5. The latter bus had been converted to H45/33F by April. MCW Metroliner DR130 C52 VJU passed to Ensign, Rainham last December.

McCulloch, Stoneykirk

The correct registration for the Van Hool integral purchased recently from Paterson & Brown, Kilbirnie is GFA 955, not GFA 855 as previously quoted.

MacDonald, Balallan

This operator is now providing the service to the South Lochs area of Lewis previously run by Kennedy, Orinsay. Frequency has been improved to 20 journeys per week, mainly through connections at Balallan albeit with peak hour journeys operating through to/from Stornoway.

MacDonald, Howmore

This South Uist company, which trades as Hebridean Coaches, is now operating revised Monday to Saturday services linking South Glendale, Lochboisdale, Balivanich, Lochmaddy and Otternish on North Uist.

MacDonald, Tobson

Based on the island of Great Bernera on the west coast of Lewis, this operator has the contract to provide a connecting service between Gairnahine on Lewis and the principal townships on Great Bernera. Connections are available at Gairnahine to/from Stornoway. One of the villages served as a request stop, Bosta, has been uninhabited for 120 years but is currently the site of archaeological excavation of Iron Age dwellings.

MacDonald, West Gerinish

Hector MacDonald of West Gerinish on South Uist, trading as MacDonald Coaches, is also operating certain journeys on the South Uist/Benbecula/North Uist link between Lochboisdale and Otternish on Mondays to Saturdays.

MacEwan, Amisfield

This company has won the contract previously held by Lowland to operate the Borders Rail Link service 95 between Galashiels and Carlisle, with effect from 2 June. The contract, the cost of which is paid one-third by Dumfries & Galloway Council and two-thirds by Borders Council, calls for the use of two vehicles with at least 45 seats and one vehicle with at least 33 seats but all with low step height, and the company has until the end of this year to obtain suitable rolling stock. Lowland is to continue the provision of three return journeys on Saturdays.

N703-6 FSM are Ford Transits with Crystals B20F bodywork which were new in May. Two other new vehicles due later this year are a Bova coach and a Plaxton-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D. RIB 9362 (2174 PH, KHG 185W) is a Duple C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R acquired in February and previously with Jones, Llanwrst. A more interesting secondhand addition, however, is Alexander O43/34F-bodied Leyland Atlantean PDRI/1 GRS 114E, latterly Grampian Transport 24 but new in 1967 as Aberdeen Corporation 114. It was being repainted into fleet colours in May for use on a proposed open-top service in Dumfries.

McGill, Barrhead

Another overall advertisement for this fleet is Leyland National B725 AGD, now mainly silver to the order of Low's Garage car dealership, albeit with normal livery retained on the front.

MacLennan, Keose

Further to the June issue when it was indicated that there were two operators by the name of MacLennan being reported under the heading of MacLennan, Laxay, it can now be confirmed that one is Alistair Ian MacLennan of Keose in the Lochs district of Lewis. The other is Peter MacLennan of Laxay in the same area.

Under the new service arrangements this firm has two schooldays-only runs, between Stornoway and Leurbost and between Newmarket and Sandwickhill in Stornoway.

MacLennan, Laxay

As mentioned above, this operator is Peter MacLennan who now operates a number of services comprising Stornoway and Lower Sandwick or Holm Village on Mondays to Fridays, Stornoway town service on Mondays to Saturdays, Stornoway and Newvalley on Mondays to Saturdays, and Stornoway to Eishken on schooldays only.

MacMillan, Eoligarry

This Barra operator is now providing improved Monday to Friday services between Castlebay and Eoligarry via Cleat or Earsary.

MacNeil, Castlebay

This company continues to provide services on Barra and the neighbouring island of Vatersay, linking the latter and Castlebay to the Cockle Strand airport and Eoligarry.

MacVicar, Linciate

This Benbecula company, trading as WMV Motor Hire, has won the contracts to provide new Monday to Friday services between Creagorry and Grimsay Island, and between East Gerinish and Ardivachar on South Uist.

Mairs, Aberdeen FB

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 718 (JSV 426, FNM 863Y) was reinstated in April.

Marbill, Beith

Alexander H44/35F-bodied Ailsa B55-10 YMS 705R was acquired last December ex-Kelvin Central 1971.

Mayne, Buckie

N500 GSM is a Scania K113CRB with Van Hool C49F coachwork which was new in February.

Meffan, Kirriemuir YT

Plaxton C57F-bodied AEC Reliance KBZ 5748 (TCW 781T, 4150 RU, EBM 444T) was acquired towards the end of last year, having previously been numbered 115 in the fleet of Shaw Hadwin, Silverdale. Two other vehicles were added to stock in February comprising Plaxton C35F-bodied Bristol LHS6L PJI 6085 (884 RCV, ROP 451R, YSU 953, RYS 943R) ex-Hall, Kennoway and PMT C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814D H223 MSX ex-Wilson, Bonnyrigg.

Midland, Auchterarder

J254 MFP, a Caetano C21F-bodied Toyota HDB30R, was acquired in April from Bluebird Buses where it had been allocated fleet number 229 although not used by that company after being purchased with the business of Gray, Fochabers.

Midland Bluebird FB

New allocation codes for the former SMT depots at Centrex (Cx), Livingston (Ln) and Westfield (Wd) are now being applied to the vehicles taken over. The vehicles concerned, for the time being, are being identified by having 1000 added to their SMT fleetnumbers and comprise Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelins 1008 (JB SMT, J864 WSC), 1009/10 (L109/10 OSX); Duple-bodied Dennis Javelin 1019 (A19 SMT, F250 OFF); ECW-bodied Leyland Fleetlines 1054/865/9-71 (OSG 54, 65/9/0/1V), 1861 (GSC 861T); Optare-bodied Mercedes-Benz O.405s 1061-70 (N61-70 CSC); ECW-bodied Leyland Olympians 1100-15 (ULS 100-15X); Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians 1117/8/22-9/32-5 (ALS 117/8/22-9/32-5Y), 1136/8-41 (A136/8-41 BSC), 1161-3 (B161-3 KSC); Alexander-bodied Leyland Lions 1174-83 (C174-83 VSF); Alexander-bodied Leyland LDTL11/1Rs 1184-6 (D184-6 ESC); Alexander-bodied Volvo B10Bs 1201/2 (L201/2 KFS), 1203-12 (L203-12 KSX); Wright-bodied Volvo B10B 1213 (L213 KSX); East Lancs-bodied Leyland Olympians 1232-7 (A77-82 RRP); Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers 1330/2 (WSV 140/35, A330/2 BSC), 1335 (WSV 144, GCS 245, B335 RLS), 1339/40 (A9,10 SMT, B339/40 RLS), 1341 (B341 BSC); Duple-bodied Leyland Tigers 1345-8 (A15-8 SMT, D345-8 ESC); Alexander-bodied Renault S56s 1431/2/9/41/2/8-51/3-6/9-63/6-8/70 (E431/2/9/41/2/8-51/3-6/9-63/6-8/70 JSG); Reeve Burgess-bodied Renault S75s 1473/4/7-9/85-99/501 (H473/4/7-9/85-99, 501 OSC); Optare MetroRiders 1510-2 (J510-2 WSX), 1513/5-7 (K513/5-7 BSX), 1524-7 (L524-7 KSX); Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennines 1604/8/16/7/24 (SSX 604/8/16/7/24V), 1637/8/44/6/54/6/7/60 (YSG 637/8/44/6/54/6/7/60W), 1896/7 (GSX 896/7T), 1979-83 (JFS 979-83X); and Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 1701/4 (ORS 201/4T), 1724/6 (XSA 224/6S), 1733-6 (YSO 233-6T), 1744/8/57 (DSA 244/8/57T).

Other recent additions to the fleet from other group companies are 738/41/3 (DSA 238/41/3T), Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1Rs previously Grampian Transport 238/41/3; 1502 (H502 OSC), Reeve Burgess B31F-bodied Renault S75 ex-Lowland 782; 1632 (YSG 632W), Alexander B53F-bodied Seddon Pennine 7 ex-Lowland 32; and 1936 (LSC 936T), a similar Seddon but DP49F and ex-Lowland 36. 741 is in fleet livery; 1632 is in Lowland yellow and green with SMT fleetnames; while 1502 and 1936 are in cream and green GRT style SMT livery.

Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger 124 (VSU 715, A124 ESG) and Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennine 7 501 (SSC 108P, 365 UMY, MSJ 371P) had been transferred to Lowland by April and by the end of last year respectively.

Millport Motors

Leyland National 2 GHB 222W has recently returned to passenger service after a lengthy absence. This bus was reported as being with AJC, Leeds in 'Fleet News' in the May issue. Wadham Stringer-bodied Volvo JSJ 435W is currently out of use.

Morrison, West Tarbert

Revised services implemented in Harris result in this operator providing Tarbert to Leverburgh on Mondays to Saturdays and a Tarbert-Stockinish circular on schooldays. PMT-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D A582 TMA is now owned by Smith, Inverurie.

Orion, Wemyss Bay

Four vehicles owned by this new operator are Carlyle B20F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa D403 SGS ex-Ely, Woodston; Robin Hood B16F-bodied Ford Transits C470/3 TAY ex-Wilson, Gourrock; and similar Rootes B16F-bodied C557 TUT ex-Red & White. A basically white with orange and blue livery is being used.

MV28 (M871 DYS) is one of two ex-Allander Travel Alexander Dash-bodied Volvo B6-50s which entered service with GCT at the beginning of May.
SANDY MACDONALD

Highland Country has now adopted a rather pleasing blue and grey livery, as carried by Leyland Leopard L109 (GMS 286S) at Kyleakin.
MURDOCH CURRIE



Park, Hamilton

More re-registrations in March concerned Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-62s LSK 444, LSK 555 and KSK 950 which are now KSK 977-9 respectively, together with Van Hool-bodied Volvo B12Ts LSK 831/2 which are now LSK 611/2 respectively.

More new owners to record for sold Volvos include Allander, Milngavie (L634/5 AYS but *not* L644 AYS as stated last month); Clarke, Lower Sydenham (L648 ADS); Collison, Stonehouse (M988 HHS); Glen, Port Glasgow (L628 AYS); HAD Coaches, Shotts (L632 AYS); and Kavanagh, Urringford (M591-9, 601 DSJ).

Peace, Kirkwall

D705 UGA, the ex-Hutchison Van Hool-bodied Volvo coach purchased last December, had previously been registered *KSK 930, D366 RHS* and not as reported earlier.

Pegasus, Errol

Alexander (Belfast) B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R GSU 859T was acquired in January ex-Kelvin Central 1519.

Prentice, West Calder

Berkhof C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 A823 WSU (731 AFD) was acquired last December from Spencer, Leven. It was quickly re-registered 383 DVF.

Shetland Islands Council

This Council, which for many years has operated the bus service on the island of Whalsay, was due to introduce a new inter-island facility on 7 June with a through, Friday-only return service between Brough on Whalsay and the Viking bus station in Lerwick on the Shetland mainland. Entitled the Whalsay Shopper, it is to use the Council's Laxo ferry service.

Shiel, Acharacle

N778 OGA is a Mercedes-Benz minibus new in April of which further details are lacking at present, but it is being used in red and white fleet livery on the Citylink service between Fort William and Mallaig which was mentioned last month.

Silver Coach Lines, Edinburgh

N122/3 RJF are Caetano C18F-bodied Toyota HZB50Rs which were new in April.

Silverdale, Airdrie

F199 BCW is a B20F Talbot Pullman acquired recently ex-Nip-On, St Helens for use on the Kirkwood and Carnbroe local service in Coatbridge. It is in full fleet livery.

Slaemuir, Port Glasgow

Robin Hood-bodied Iveco 49.10 D545 HNW has been sold to Tower, Gourcock.

SMT FB

Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1Rs YSO 236T, DSA 248/57T were acquired in February and numbered 736/48/57, ex-Grampian Transport 236/48/57.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Lion 178 (C178 VSF) was deroofed in Edinburgh in March.

The remaining news of this company comprises withdrawals prior to the beginning of April when the remainder of the fleet was split between Midland Bluebird and Lowland. The vehicles out of service by then were Alexander-bodied Ailsa B55-10s 41/6, 50, 778 (TSJ 601S, BGG 256/60S, CSG 778S); Duple-bodied Leyland Tigers 344 (? , A14 SMT, B466 WRN), 352/3 (?? , A12/3 SMT, E352/3 KSF), 568 (WSV 143, B568 LSC), 569 (B569 LSC); Alexander-bodied Renault S56s 436-8/43/47/52 (E436-8/43/47/52 JSG); Alexander-bodied Seddon Pennines 623, 933/8 (SSX 623V, LSC 933/8T); and ECW-bodied Leyland Fleetline 866 (OSG 66V).

Details of which vehicles went to Lowland and Midland Bluebird are given under these headings above. The only vehicle which remains active in the SMT fleet is Alexander-bodied AEC Regal B23 (AWG 623).

Southern, Barrhead

Caetano C18F-bodied Toyota HDB30R K90 SOU was sold to Caetano (dealer), Heather in March. It has subsequently joined the Wilson, Carnwath fleet.

Strathclyde Buses SB

The first 60 of the new Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians either have been or are being built, but there may now be a question mark over the remaining 90 in view of press reports to the effect that FirstBus would replace double-deck buses with single-decks if acquisition of SB Holdings goes ahead.

Fleetnumbers from VO44 onwards have been allocated to the new Olympians, and the first to enter service in mid-May were VO44-9, 51 (N944-9/51 SOS) which appear to be to the standard design favoured by Stagecoach, no doubt reflecting the financial interest which that company has had in SB Holdings. VO51 is a mainly white overall advertisement for Esso, albeit with its front in fleet livery.

Like the Kelvin Central recipients of the new group fleetnumbers, they only carry these numbers on the rear in a rather inconspicuous location. The first 10 are being allocated to Parkhead depot, primarily for use on services 62 and 64, but the intention is to split the 60 equally between all four depots.

Another new overall advertising livery for this fleet is Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian LO96, now all-over white to the order of Camelot. It is noteworthy in that the front does not retain fleet colours. Volvo Citybus AH76 has lost its blue all-over treatment for Farmfoods and is now back in fleet livery albeit with its rear end modified for advertising, like others of its type.

MCW Metrobuses MBC63/4 are now reported to have had their entire upper deck seating converted from coach to bus seats to combat vandalism.

Strathtay YT

Alexander-bodied Leyland Fleetlines 715/6 were resated from H44/31F to H44/34F in March. Plaxton B31F-bodied Renault S75s 201 (J134 HME) and 206 (H129 AML) were transferred to sister company Lincolnshire in April.

Stuart, Carlisle

M116 XLV is a Mercedes-Benz 709D with Plaxton B23F bodywork acquired in March ex-GM Buses North.

Tower, Gourcock

D545 HNW, an Iveco 49.10 with Robin Hood B21F bodywork, has been acquired from Slaemuir, Port Glasgow.

West Coast, Campbelltown

N300 WCM is a Volvo B10M-48 with Van Hool C45F coachwork which was new in April. Former Armchair, Brentford Van Hool-bodied DAF M837 RCP has been re-registered M700 WCM, and another coach of this type obtained from the same source is M838 RCP which has now been re-registered M800 WCM.

From mid-May this company has operated two return journeys per day between Oban and Fort William, effectively as part of the Citylink network.

Western Scottish ST

The first of the 20 new Plaxton Première C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s expected this year arrived in April in the shape of 142-7 (N142-7 XSA). Unlike earlier examples, they have no rear window, reminiscent of Plaxton Expressliners. All carry Stagecoach Express lettering with 142-5 allocated to Dumfries and 146/7 to Ardrossan.

A further acquisition in April was 297 (F197 ASD, 341 AYF, F648 FGE), a Mercedes-Benz 609D with Reeve Burgess C24F coachwork previously one of the vehicles used by Clyde Coast, Ardrossan to operate its share of the Clyde Coaster 535 service between Ayr and Greenock.

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz minibuses 214/22 have been given a blue and white all-over advertising treatment for the Kyle Centre shopping centre in Ayr.

In April several vehicles were sold to Kirkby (dealer), Anston comprising Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 167 (CYJ 531Y, 403 DCD, XUF 533Y) which had not been used since its purchase in January due to bodywork defects; former A1 Service Phoenix-bodied Iveco 49.10s 270/1 (G575/6 YTR); and former Arran Transport Duple-bodied Bedford YMT 725 (D167 TRA) and Plaxton-bodied YMT 726 (D917 GRU).

At the end of May the frequency of service X2 (Dumfries and Glasgow) was doubled to six per day, and new service X1 (Annan and Edinburgh) was introduced with interchange facilities available at Moffat between the two services.

It is anticipated that the head office of this company will move from Nursery Avenue, Kilmarnock to Waggon Road, Ayr in July or August subject to relevant planning permission being granted.

Westside, Greenock

Robin Hood B21F-bodied Iveco 49.10 D25 KAX was back in this fleet by March, having been with Bellview, Paisley for some time.

White, Bridge of Walls

Two Monday to Saturday circular journeys between Lerwick and Vidlin were introduced at the beginning of June.

Whyte, Newmachar

Van Hool C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 C180 USS (7173 WW, C301 JNS) and Van Hool T815-C49Ft integral K545 GSS are now owned by Clark & Smith, Fraserburgh and Tate, Markyate respectively.

Wilson, Carnwath

SJI 5624 (7076 LJ, LGB 853V) is a Volvo B58-61 with Plaxton C57F coachwork acquired in March from Lochview, Greenock and K90 SOU is a Toyota HDB30R with Caetano C18F coachwork ex-Southern, Barrhead.

Yule, Pitlochry

D569 MVR is a Volvo B10M-61 with Plaxton C53F coachwork acquired in March ex-Midland, Auchterarder.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

J. Anderson, Bluebird Buses, A. Bramhall, C. Brazier, P. Clark MHS, R. Clark, M. Clarke, R. Crossan, M. Currie, J. Dignan, J. Dunne, A. Gronneberg, J. Hamilton, T. Hamilton, S. Hulse, N. Jones, D. Kat, R. Lee, S. Little, P. Mudel, B. Nicol, PSV Circle, Ride the Royal Mail Postbus, D. Simpson, Strathclyde Buses, R. Walter, Western Enthusiasts Club, Western Scottish Buses, and G. Whiteley have contributed news in recent weeks and their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Group codes

BB — British Bus
FB — FirstBus
NX — National Express Group
RN — Rapsons
SB — Strathclyde Buses Holdings
ST — Stagecoach
YT — Yorkshire Traction



Far left:
Strathclyde has started taking delivery of its Volvo Olympians with rather severe-looking Alexander bodywork. VO45 (N945 SOS) is seen in Argyle Street on 24 May.
BILLY NICOL

Left:
A contrast at Skyeways; recently-acquired ex-demonstrator Mercedes-Benz O.405/Optare Prisma M925 TYG) and Plaxton-bodied AEC Reliance VHV 109G stand at Clan Garage, Kyle of Lochalsh.
MURDOCH CURRIE

HONG KONG

Argos Bus

New is Toyota Coaster/Arakawa B24F GN 1521 and C24F GN 675.

Now re-certified and in blue livery are former London DMS-class Daimler Fleetline 10 (CT 4919, *THM 641M*), 31 (DD 2972, *OJD 124R*) and former South Yorkshire 49 (DT 1776, *OKW 505R*), 46 (DR 6849, *OKW 509R*) is also now at work.

Not previously recorded is the open-top conversion of former West Midlands Daimler Fleetline/Park Royal 62 (EB 4267, *GOG 572N*) to open-top as O44/34F. It now wears a green-based livery for the Panda Tour.

Former London DMS-class 30 (DD 2113, *OJD 123R*) has been sold to Local Travel Agency.

China Motor Bus

Last November the Guy Arab V stock — so long a distinctive feature of this fleet — was down to just 21 examples, all rebodied in the early 1980s. The survivors were LX300/2-4/6/8-10/4-6/9/22/5/32/34/30/3/5/6/8. At the same time, the driver training fleet containing the four ex-LW class Guy Arab Vs, all with forward-entrance Metsec bodies, as T8-10, T13 (AD 4549/1/8/99); the other trainer was former London DMS-class Daimler Fleetline/Park Royal T19 (CW 7787, *MLK 557L*). The Alexander-rebodied LX class vehicles represent the last members of the world's largest fleet of Guy Arabs.

CX4, 7, 8 are now re-registered BJ 825, CJ 790 and CX 908 respectively, these 'cherished' three-digit plates coming from Fleetline's LF50, XF49 and XF139 respectively.

Now withdrawn are XF93/5 and LF241 as well as MCW Metroriders CM1, 2 (DY 835, 1680). The MCWs were scrapped on-site by the company (as is the norm).

Citybus

Deliveries of new stock continue in this progressive fleet.

Licensed for service last year were Volvo Olympians 427/8/30-40/3/9/56/9-83 (GM 6872, 8856, 3815, 4350, 2871, 3523, 8303, 2972, 6773, 3255, 6754, 7352, 8361, 5427, 3206, 2664, 6398, 3346, 3538, 4002, 5644, 2650, 5127, 5896, 6384, 8486, 4803, 4689, 4809, 7332, 6615, 6832, 6785, 7027, 8183, 8267, 6891, 6779, 7991, 7118, GN 5150); Dennis Dragons 832-7 (GM 5723, 6324, 7811, 7339, 6583, 6898) and Dennis Darts 1401-21 (GM 9051, 6631, 5868, 6090, 5334, 9182, 6331, 4964, 5431, 7131, 8040, 7558, 5376, 7606, 8109, 6788, 7642, 8269, 7990, 9240, 6717). Of these, 427/30-40/3 are non-franchised vehicles.

Acquired from Volvo Bus was Volvo B6/Alexander Dash B39F 1301 (GJ 155) and additionally, front-engined Guy Victory 2/Alexander H60/42D 37 and 40 (CY 3749, CX 3816) were reinstated from reserve.

Late last year the driver training bus fleet comprised early Leyland Olympian/ECW 102 (DE 4281), rebuilt ex-Singapore Atlantean/Alexander 'AL' 602/3 (FP 125; FS 5219, *SBS5365/4*) unrebuilt 628/60 (FP 5304; FR 1466, *SBS2381*, 3419) and Alexander 'R'-type 699 (FX 1940, *SBS2393*).

Twelve-metre Dennis Dragon DDA2302/Metsec-Caetano H56/42D 843/8-50 (GP 8055, 8260, 6675, 8266) were delivered last November, as were UK show-exhibit Olympian 484 and Volvo B12 YV3R2/Jonckheere Monaco 2001-5.

Leyland Olympian/ECW 105 emerged from a full refurbishment complete with contemporary-style Alexander front end, re-licensed as DU 5866 in fleet livery.

By January, 12m Volvo Olympian/Alexander H57/42D 484 (GP 9991) was placed in service, with new 12m Dennis Dragon DDA2302/Metsec Caetano H56/42D 851-8 delivered and 853-5 licensed/registered as GR 4432, 2547, 2793 in series. Also in service were Volvo B6/Plaxton Pointer 1302-11.

Leyland Olympian/Roe 18 (DN 4435, *CUB 57Y*) is now converted to open-top O47/29F format, repainted in corporate livery and reclassified as a non-franchised bus.

Guy Victory 2/Alexander 41, 42 (CX 4011, 9511) have been withdrawn.

Discovery Bay Transit

New are Mercedes O.405/Asia B30D HKR109/10 (GM 6282, GN 940), the first vehicles in the fleet with automatic transmission.

Hong Kong Air Cargo Terminal Ltd

Deliveries here are of 12-metre Dennis Dragon DDA2302/Metsec-Caetano H67/42D 97-100.

KCRC

Recent deliveries are Volvo B10M/Northern Counties B40F 407-10/2/4 (GM 4729, 4875, 5559, 5352, 4969, 7189) and Dennis Dart/Northern Counties B43F 501-3 (GN 5128, 6355, 5032).

Kowloon Motor Bus

Further new vehicles into service are: 11-metre Dennis Dragon/Metsec H62/40D AD198 (GL 9740) and AD234/42/5 (GM 8204, GN 1674, 2274), AD203/7-33/5/6/46/8-50/2/6-64/6/9/70/3-5 (GL 9201, GM 2543/9/80, 3276, 3684, 3701, 4024/82, 4460, 4500, 4781, 5125/45, 5219, 5591, 5634, 6125/74, 6242, 6315, 6562, 6701, 7198, 7658/71, 7856, 7971, 9114, 9421; GR 2809, 4043, 4428, 2575, 3285, 5950 4581, 4634/40, 5269/92, 5386, 5548, 5843, 6753, 7513/6, 8375, 8689, 9096); 11-metre Volvo Olympian/Alexander H63/29D AV104 (GL 4039); 12m Volvo Olympian/Alexander H57/42D 3AV52/3-5/9, 65, 66, 70-74 (GN 4157, 3509, 2841, 2984, 4081, 4179, 4230, 6976, 7615, 6758, 6912, 7088, 7875, 7913) and DPH57/42D 3AV81/7-96 (GP 5367, 6827, 7295, 7429, 8186, 8485, 7179, 7340, 6274, 6654/90), 3AV98-120 (GP 6970, 7100, 7285, 7359/87, 7629, 7748, 7842/57, 8003, 8306/9, 7618, 8170; GR 550, 614, 1463, 1747, 2284, 2326, 2498, 4110, 6291); Mitsubishi MK217J/Mitsubishi B35F AM184 (GP 5016). Of these, 3AV95/6/8-106/9 are branded for the new circular service 100 'Cross Harbour Shuttle' (Tsimshatsui-Causeway Bay-Yau Ma Tei-Tsimshatsui). Also, not previously recorded is 11-metre Volvo Olympian/Alexander H68/40D S3V22 (GK 9636). Dennis Dart/Carlyle mobile service centre AA1 has B21F layout.

Eleven-metre Dennis Dragon/Metsec H69/41D S3N248 (EU 5242) is now re-registered GL 9743 and is thought rebodied while Leyland Olympian/Alexander H63/39D 3SBL174 (GP 7258) has been rebodied by Sai King in Guang Zhou.

Now withdrawn are Arakawa-bodied Toyota Coasters AT30/4/5, 42-5, 54/6-9, 60, 61; BaCo-bodied Fleetlines D1025-8/30/50-2/4/90; Guy Victory G21, 133, 346-52/4/6/7/9-63/6-70/2/4-82/5-9/90/2/3/5/6/8, 400/1/4 and driver trainer Fleetlines formerly D955/66/7.

MCW Metrobuses 3M1 and 3M2 (CN 870, CP 5230) are now converted to driver trainers in H00/17D format and no longer carry fleetnumbers. From July last year, a programme has been under way to convert some of the front-engined Alexander-bodied Dennis Jubilant N-class to driver trainers. In addition to those already reported N282/4/7/93-5, 305/7/27/8 have also been converted.

Lantau Tours

Part of the Kwoon Chung Group, a new receipt is Isuzu/Sui King C43F GM 5842.

Volvo Bus

Prototype three-axle Volvo Olympian chassis YN025004 has been imported (minus gearbox) for dismantling. It has never been bodied.

Thanks are again due to Timothy Phillips for the regular supply of news from Hong Kong.

MALTA

Burmarrad Commercials, Burmarrad

The ERF dealer was still in possession of the Marshall-bodied route bus demonstrator in May which is badged as an ERF Islander. Five rear-engined ERF Trailblazer coaches powered by Cummins L10 engines are now in service on the Island. Four with Unicarbodies were delivered last November to separate operators while ACV 985 with a Camo body for **Naw Garage, Naxxar** arrived in January.

Cancu Garage, Zejtun

The three open-top Thamesdown ECW-bodied Leyland Fleetlines still await permission to operate, three years after they were purchased, and as such are still unregistered locally. Currently stored at Zejtun, UMR 193T retains Thamesdown livery while UMR 192T is painted all-over white and UMR 191T is painted in a white and orange scheme.

Also owned but not in use is ex-Greater Manchester PTE Leyland Panther Cub/Massey DJP 468E latterly used by the Maltese Government and registered M-1526-M. A normal-control Dodge route bus is preserved by the company in the Zebbug/Siggiewi/Qorm route livery.

Garden of Eden Garage, Gaxaq

Stored for preservation is Aquilina-bodied Bedford OB route bus 1225 now registered J-4792-M and painted in the colours of the Maltese Labour Party.

This operator is also awaiting permission to operate its open-top double-deckers. Ex-Thamesdown Leyland Fleetline OHR 189R, which features in the 1996 Garden of Eden calendar, has been fully prepared and painted with sign writing saying 'Enjoy a sightseeing Tour of Malta'. Sister bus OHR 188R retains Thamesdown colours and ex-Northampton Daimler CVG6/Roe JVV 266E has been painted all white in preparation for sign writing. Open-top conversion took place in the UK at the site of the Hawkes collection near Spalding prior to shipment.

Leopard Garage, Birzebujja

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger Y-0945-M, latterly H266 GRY in the fleet of Reliance, Gravesend has been fitted with a 12-speed gearbox from an ERF truck according to the owner.

NETHERLANDS

NZH

A batch of four Berkhof-bodied 10.6-metre Dennis Dart SLFs are currently in-build for this operator and are set to enter service in late summer. They follow a one-off built last year and exhibited at the Körtrijk Show last October. All five buses will be based at Haarlem.

The Berkhof-bodied Dennis Dart SLF built for NZH and exhibited at the Körtrijk Show last October outside the Dennis factory in Guildford during May.

ANDY IZATT

Once upon a time this Maltese route bus was a London Transport AEC Swift! Locally modified, it has a Plaxton Paramount-lookalike front and an mid-mounted underfloor engine, probably a Cummins B-series which would make it mechanically similar to a Leyland Swift of a later generation.

JOHN G. LIDSTONE



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IRISH MAJOR OPERATORS

Ulsterbus

The last delivery of the batch of 30 Volvo B10M/Plaxton Première Goldliners to enter service was 1629 (JAZ 1629) which is allocated to Downpatrick depot while another Mercedes 711D with Alexander B25F body is 904 (JAZ 3904) allocated to Great Victoria Street depot.

Leyland Leopard 1891 (OSJ 606R) with Alexander Y-type body has passed from the driving school to the engineering department to become the tow wagon at Enniskillen where it displaces a 20-year old Bedford YLQ 1841 (LOI 1841) for disposal.

Overall advertising vehicle 1035, a Leyland Tiger based at Bangor, has taken on a new corporate advertisement for Citybus/Northern Ireland Railways/Ulsterbus 'Working Together for Northern Ireland' (previously 'Now We Are Smoke Free'). 1143 is the vehicle returned to fleet livery from the 'No Smoking' all over advertising livery and not 1043 as previously reported. 1043 carries the all-over advertising livery for Tango.

Among vehicles displaced from Ulsterbus to Flexibus are 1810-12 (AAZ 6810-12) Mercedes 811D with Wright C25F bodywork off the Airbus service and 863/873 (TXI 7863/73) Mercedes 709D with Wright DP25F bodywork from Busybuses duties. These and other Mercedes 609D 19-seaters originally purchased for Flexibus but latterly operated by Ulsterbus in country depots, are expected to enable Flexibus to upgrade its fleet both on capacity and on average age by displacing Mercedes 608D vehicles dating from between 1984 and 1986.

Among the transferred vehicles is 31 (CDZ 6664) Mercedes 609D, with Wright C20F conversion which was the last vehicle ordered by Sureline Coaches Ltd, but delivered to Ulsterbus at Craigavon where it has operated since new.

Citybus

Bristol RELL 2353 (UOI 2353) was reinstated to service from the reserve fleet in April, while a month later similar 2338 (UOI 2338) was withdrawn with accident damage. This was the vehicle which only recently had its centre doorway sealed up.

Dublin Bus

More Volvo Olympians in CitySwift livery have been delivered to Clontarf, RA267-77 (96 D 267-77), with two more expected to complete the batch there. These and RA264-6 are in use on new CitySwift route 27, which began on 19 May running from the city centre to a new terminus at Clare Hall, beyond Coolock, every 7/8min in the peak and 10min off-peak and 15min on Sundays. As a result GAC single-deckers KC9, 16, 21 have been put into store and older Olympians RH159-67 have been transferred to Phibsborough, enabling Bombardiers KD41, 75 (41, 75 JZL), 202/17/22 (202/17/22 OZU) to be withdrawn there and KD131/3 to be transferred to Ringsend for further service.

Other withdrawals of Bombardiers are KD158/68 (158/68 JZL) at Donnybrook, KD60 (60 JZL), 257 (257 OZU) at Ringsend and KD53, 67/9 (53, 67/9 JZL) at Conyngham Road. Meanwhile Van Hool-bodied Leyland Atlantean DS725 (725 ZO) has been withdrawn from the driving school. The next new buses will be for Donnybrook or to start a new sequence at Ringsend.

The new Stationlink livery for route 90 is now being applied to DAF single-deckers at Conyngham Road; so far AD27, 30 have appeared thus, with dark green lower parts and beige upper. AD26/9, 31 are to follow though AD28 is to remain in CitySwift colours.

Donnybrook has launched a new express route 84X, Kilcoole/Greystones to the city bypassing Bray, which runs throughout the day from 07.30 until 17.50, rather than just in the peaks. Journey time is an hour and it fills a gap in commuter services in the South Wicklow area, where the DART extends only to Bray. Unlike the normal 84, which serves Ballsbridge in the city centre it serves the Leeson Street/Stephens Green area.

Phibsborough Olympian RH2 is not a candidate for an overall advertising livery after all, but Donnybrook's RA176 is shortly to appear in a new livery marking Ireland's presidency of the EU, beginning in July. RH106 is being prepared at Ringsend for Chef Food Products.

The City Tours fleet has been expanded with open-top converted Van Hool-bodied Leyland Atlanteans D685 at Donnybrook and DF696, D710, DF722 at Summerhill.

Bus Eireann

The first 10 of the 25 Plaxton Première-bodied Volvo B10M coaches have arrived, with the remaining 15 due in the summer. VP11-3 (96 D 25727/31/6) are at Broadstone, VP13 for tours; VP14/5 (96 D 25743/58) are at Limerick for tours and VP16-20 (96 D 25740/62/8/46/51) are at Waterford. They are similar to VP1-10 and are unusual in having manual transmission.

The new Caetano Algarve II-bodied Volvo B10Ms are all in service and a handing-over ceremony was held at the Royal Hospital, Kilmaham, in Dublin. A further 43 have been ordered and in view of the size of this order a special version of the Algarve II body is to be produced to Bus Eireann's specification. The handover ceremony involved VC23 (96 D 20466) and VC30 (96 D 27482) in the special grey and red livery for the Rapide-style non-stop hostess-accompanied service from Dublin to Limerick and radiating to West Clare and Kerry. These special coaches (VC29-32) are downseated to C46Ft to allow for a toilet and catering. Allocations are as reported last month and the outstanding vehicles are VC25-7 (96 D 22858/64/1), VC28 (96 D 27430), VC30-2 (96 D 27482/8/94).

An interesting order has been placed for 10 Wright-bodied Volvo low-floor single-deckers for city services in Cork or Limerick. On the subject of Cork, Bombardier double-deckers KD186/95 are in service, though KD192 at Limerick remains in doubt.

An arson attack at Macroom destroyed Leyland Tiger/Alexander TE12 (88 D 19012) and badly damaged KR132 parked alongside. GAC Citybus KC5 has been transferred from Waterford to Cork and rural bus KR20 from Dundalk to Broadstone, while Plaxton-bodied DAFs PD32, 56 have gone from Limerick to Waterford in exchange for DAF/Van Hools DVH14-6 which have reverted to Limerick for the summer touring season, along with DVH13 from Broadstone. The Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10B, VNC1, has returned to Limerick and DAF/Alexander DA3 has returned to Cork.

Trams for France - built in UK

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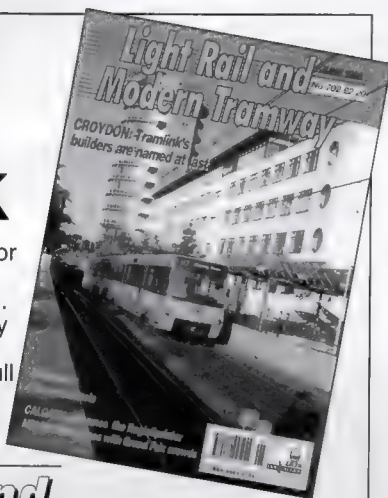
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Bus Eireann has been taking new Caetano Algarve II-bodied Volvo B10Ms. VC23 (96 D 20466) is C51F while VC30 (96 D 27482) is C46F with galley in the new Superbus grey livery for a non-stop service between Dublin and West Clare. Both were at the Royal Hospital, Kilmalnam, Dublin for the handover ceremony on 23 May.

JOHN A. DOHERTY

Withdrawals from the schoolbus fleet are Leyland Leopard PSU5/4Rs MGS6, 22, 55/7 (6 IK etc) at Waterford and MGS176/87 (176/87 IK) at Stranorlar and Limerick. Bedfords withdrawn are SB5s SS231 (BZO 231) at Cork, SS359, 413/38 (PZO 359, 413/38) at Athlone, SS465 (PZO 465) at Ballina, SS481/2 (PZO 481/2) at Tralee, SS542/98 (UZU 542/98), 754 (754 ZI) at Broadstone, SS693 (693 ZD) at Waterford and SS753/67 (753/67 ZI) at Dundalk. Bedford VASs withdrawn are SS729/30 (729/30 ZI) at Broadstone and SS90 (EZL 90) at Cork; the last is believed to have been bought by several UK preservationists. Bedford/Marshall schoolbus BM67 has been transferred from Broadstone to Sligo.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

Chambers, Moneymore

Jonckheere C49Ft-bodied Mercedes-Benz OH1628Ls 92 LK 1451 and 92 LK 1458 have been acquired from Conway, Limerick and are now registered SIW 7177/8 respectively.

Graham, Kilkeel

The first vehicle reported with this new operator trading as Shoreline Tours is 191 AAU (PWP 666Y), a Bova EL26-581 C53F ex Chambers, Moneymore.

Lagan College, Castlereagh

Recently acquired by this school was E582 MYE, a Renault G10/Wadham Stringer B32FL ex Springham, Dartford.

McBrearty, Londonderry

A recent addition to this fleet is HUI 4742 (FHS 757X), a Volvo B10M-61/Duple C53F ex Hynes, Bearsden.

McCauley, Belleek

A recent addition to this fleet is KIW 7367 (G699 UNR), a TAZ Dubrava D3200 C53F integral ex Chambers, Moneymore.

McGinn, Ballycastle

Scania K93CRB/Plaxton C53F G916 EHF (KOV 2, G887 DHP) has been acquired from Shaw, Coventry. It is now registered RIV 7663.

Rooney, Hilltown

Two acquisitions from Travelwise, Larne are Bedford YMT/Plaxton C53F RSJ 656R and Ford R1114/Duple C53F YSL 377T.

St Patricks College, Maghera

An unusual purchase by this school is SIW 6985, a Mercedes-Benz OH1416/Wright B47F Urbanranger. Also owned is SIW 1365, a Mercedes-Benz 811D/Nu Track B33F.

Sinnamon, Dungannon

A Leyland Leopard acquired from Ashall, Levenshulme is PSU5C/4R EBM 437T with Duple C57F bodywork.

Stewart, Glengormley

A Ford R1114 with Plaxton C53F coachwork acquired from Cammonee Presbyterian church for spares is XMA 207M.

White, Keady

Volvo B58-61/Duple C53F TND 113X has been acquired from Fowler, Holbeach Drove.



Right: Alexander (Belfast)-bodied DAF SB220 AD30 (94 D 3030) painted in a special livery for the 90 Stationlink service. CHRISTINA CURTIS



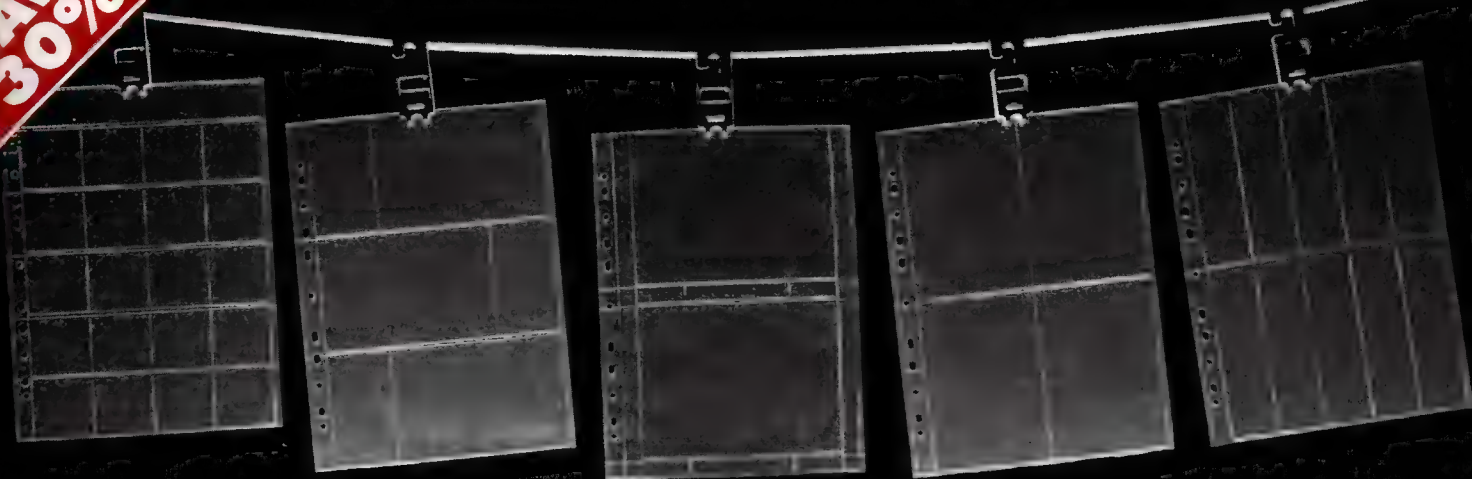
Far right: FS1 (95 D 35256) is a Fiat Ducato allocated to Broadstone for the Central Remedial Clinic school contract. CHRISTINA CURTIS



Right: Dublin Bus's Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Volvo B10B VA2 (96 D 2002) works Stationlink service 90. D. HALL

Far right: Ards Tours of Newtonards own ex-Tayside Alexander/Bristol VRT OSR 187R. JOHN YOUNG

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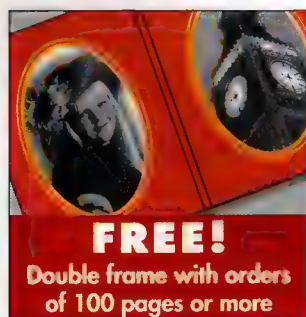
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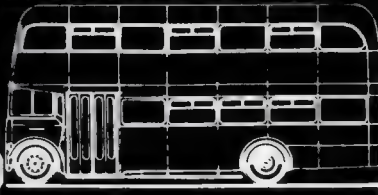
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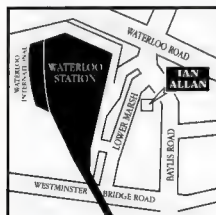
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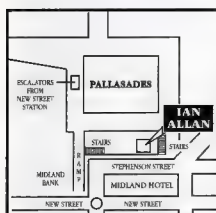
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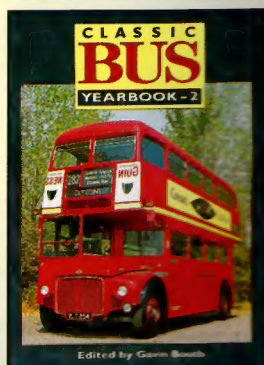
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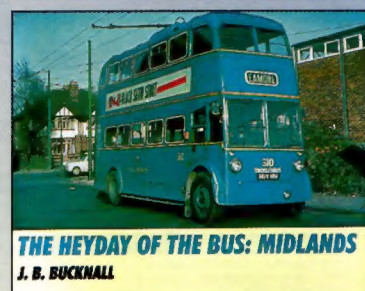
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18401	Leyland TS8 West Riding	£12.00
19701	Regent 3 - Sheffield	£12.00
19804	Coventry Showbus	£14.99
10110	D.L. AEC RT Taylor Woodrow	£9.75
10302	Cyril Ridgeon Dropside	£9.75
10401	Portland Cement Flat	£9.75
10402	London Brick F/Bed	£9.75
10502	Starline Box Van	£9.75
10505	Oxydol Box Van	£9.75
10506	Hoover Box Van	£9.75
10602	Bunn Tanker	£9.75
10703	Wimpey Flatbed Lorry	£9.75
10807	British Steel Dropside	£9.75
10901	Haygates Flour Tnkr	£9.75
10902	Lord Rayleighs Farm	£9.75
10904	Ranks Flour AEC D/L	£9.75
11001	Croft Org Box Van	£9.75
11006	Roses Lime Juice Van	£9.75
12003	Taylor Wilcox AEC D/L	£9.75
12103	Hebble Cavalier Coach	£9.75
14002	E National Lodekka DL	£9.75
15705	Abbotts Plaxton D/Luxe	£9.75
15901	Leicester Mercury PD1	£9.75
17802	Open Top London Plus	£9.75
17904	'Showbus' Orion Spec	£9.75
10301	Fenland Aggregates	£9.75
10009	L.P.G. Tanker Lorry	£9.75
12004	Ketton Cement Wagon	£9.75
11007	AEC 8 Wheel Box Bouts	£9.75
12105	Cavalier Neath/Carid	£9.75
12106	Cavalier Valiant	£9.75
12204	Cavalier Orange Lux	£9.75
12305	Granadale Ellen Smith	£9.75
12306	BOAC Harrington Coach	£9.75
12802	Suttons Lorry	£9.75
13101	Dents Spenny Moor/ATK	£9.75
13201	Suttons Tanker	£9.75
13403	Trans Leeds/Jacobs	£9.75
13404	WWII Leeds Tank	£9.75
13908	Northdals & Derby	£9.75
13909	Bristol Lodekka Cambu	£9.75
14003	Crossville Lodekka	£9.75
14201	Alexander Midland L/D	£9.75
14202	Midland General Lodek	£9.75
14303	Leeds Tram York E/Pos	£9.75

14403	United National Short	£9.75
15103	Northern National	£9.75
15601	R M Route 8A	£9.75
15603	Black Prince RM	£9.75
15606	East Yorks FLF	£9.75
15608	R M LT BEA	£9.75
15609	R M Mansfield and Dist	£9.75
15611	R M Eastenders	£9.75
15613	Blackpool R M	£9.75
15615	R M United Counties	£9.75
15617	R M ST. Coache E. London	£9.75
15706	Plaxton Greyhound	£9.75
15707	Grey Green Plaxton	£9.75
15708	Barton Plaxton Coach	£9.75
15803	PD1 L/Bridge East Mid	£9.75
15902	PD1 H/Bridge Ribble	£9.75
16005	PD2 Midland Reg	£9.75
16101	Wigan Corp. Leyl PD2	£9.75
16110	Liverpool Corp. PD2	£9.75
16109	PD2 H.B. Portsmouth	£9.75
16204	MW South Midland	£9.75
16404	RT LT Vernons	£9.75
16505	Atlanean Plymouth	£9.75
16506	Sheffield Atlanean	£9.75
16508	Atlanean Northern	£9.75
16511	Atlanean Hull Corp.	£9.75
16701	L.T./Leyland National	£9.75
17202	Thamesway National	£9.75
17203	National York. Terrier	£9.75
17901	Open Top RM L.T.	£9.75
18103	Leeds Atlanean	£9.75
18304	WWII Leyland Tiger	£9.75
18306	W. Welsh Leyland TS8	£9.75
18405	Leyland TS8 Lincoln	£9.75
18707	Stevensons SB Vega	£9.75
18709	Blord Vega Prem Watfd	£9.75
19301	Artic Suttons Flatbed	£9.75
19302	Atkinson Export W/TRL	£9.75
19502	Pickfords Artic	£9.75
19601	BRS Articulated Lorry	£9.75
19703	Orion St. Helens	£9.75
19704	AEC Reg V Sth Wales	£9.75
19705	AEC Regent Sam Legdard	£9.75
19801	Daimler Manchester City	£9.75
19802	Potteries CVG6	£9.75
19803	Dundee Daimler	£9.75
19804	Daimler Coventry CV	£9.75
19805	West Mid. Daimler CV	£9.75
20105	Bedford DB East Counties	£9.75
20107	Premier Bedford DB	£9.75
20109	East Yorks Bedford DB	£9.75

CORGI FIRST HALF 1996 RELEASES

Code	Description	Price	Due
34801	Leyland Olympian	£13.45	Jan
34101	Burlingham Seagull	£13.45	Feb
34701	Ribblesdale Batty Holt	£20.99	Mar
35001	AEC Routemaster	£20.99	Jun
35201	Daimler CW Utility	£19.75	Apr
35301	Leyland Atlanean	£20.99	Jun
35002	AEC Routemaster	£20.99	Jun
33201	AEC Regal Coach, Finglands	£13.49	Jul
35003	AEC Routemaster Bus, Shillbeer	£20.49	

CORGI PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Code	Description	Price
10057	Slumberland Gift Set	£14.99
91914	Plaxton Speedlink	£8.99
96982	AEC Regent Rochdale	£12.99
96990	AEC Regal Set	£16.99
96995	Ian Allan 50th Anniversary Set	£14.99
97001	AEC Regent Potteries	£6.99
97003	AEC Regent West Bridgford	£6.99
97050	Open Top Regent Set	£14.99
97061	Coventry Bus Set	£15.99
97064	Blackpool Bus Set	£22.99
97066	Routemaster Set Scotland	£16.99
97067	Routemaster In Exile Midlands	£16.99
97070	Silver Service Set	£16.99
97072	Provincial Bus Set	£14.99
97075	South Wales Set	£19.99
97077	East Lancashire Set	£24.99
97078	Corkills to Kasteel OB Set	£19.99
97079	Premier Set Watford	£19.99
97107	Murgotrogs Bedford	£9.99
97181	Timpons Halfcab AEC	£11.99

97184	AEC Regal Cream/Red	£11.99
97185	AEC Regal West Riding	£11.99
97191	Rosslyn AEC Halfcab	£11.99
97193	Carney AEC Halfcab	£11.99
97194	Hardings AEC Halfcab	£11

NEW

Releases for June 1996



Bristol VR – 20305 West Yorkshire

Carrying adverts for the Yorkshire Evening Post, fleet number 1960, registration number UWY 64L, is on route 320 to Penny Pot Lane and makes a fine addition to the popular OB coach that was released earlier in the year.



Orion PD – 20004 Sunderland

The classic lines of the Orion body are captured by this model in the Sunderland livery. PUP 547, fleet number 275, carries an interesting advert promoting the use of buses instead of cars and for "Binns", a local shop.



BET AEC Regal – 20502 South Wales

The new AEC appears this month in the famous colours of South Wales Transport. A common sight around the Llanelly dock's area, CTH 930, fleet number 20, is seen here en route to Furnace.



1:76 Scale/00 gauge precision diecast models

Each of Exclusive First Editions, 1:76 scale precision diecast models is produced only once, so every advertised model is new. The company endeavours to produce only sufficient stock to meet the immediate demand. To save disappointment and enable you to place your orders with your dealer as early as possible, you can now subscribe to receiving all EFE illustrated new release programmes as soon as they are published by sending your name and address and post code along with £2,50 (U.K.) annual subscription to...



Plaxton Pointer – 20604 Yorkshire Terrier

Complimenting and replacing the earlier Leyland National, Yorkshire Terriers buses have recently become part of the Yorkshire Traction group after operating around Sheffield for eight years. Given a "select" number plate when new, K9 YTB, fleet number 109, is seen on route 10 to Darnall.



Bedford OB – 20113 Sheffield United Transport

The unusual colour scheme of this much requested company, lends itself well to the styling on this Bedford OB, our second Sheffield vehicle this month. Shown on a trip to Blackpool, fleet number 153, registration JWW 531, is a highly accurate model.



Bristol MW – 16211 Morris Bros.

To compliment the Lodekka released earlier in the year, this ex United MW with its distinctive side styling, was run by Morris Bros. for several years. Sure to be in great demand among serious collectors, 302 GHN makes an attractive and welcome addition to the range.



AEC Ergomatic Tipper – 21501 Phillips

The second release of our Ergomatic cab is the AEC version on a tipper chassis. This particular model was a Mammoth Major 8, having eight wheels and a six cylinder engine. STK 159L led a hard life working from its depot in Parkstone.



Leyland Ergo Tanker – 22301 Major

The first tanker for this year appears with the Ergo cab on an eight wheeled chassis in the livery of Major Oils of Hull. Displaying the famous Leyland "Octopus" name, this large and colourful vehicle, SAT 119G, is an example of what was a popular choice with tanker operators thanks to its even weight distribution through the chassis.

Exclusive First Editions, P.O. Box 172, Milton Keynes, MK11 3JE